

**VCU****THE COMMONWEALTH EDUCATIONAL POLICY INSTITUTE**  
CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY - L. DOUGLAS WILDER SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS**2014 General Assembly**  
**K-12 Education Update****March 10, 2014**

The 2014 General Assembly session adjourned on Saturday, March 8 without completing action on a state budget for the next two fiscal years. Governor Terry McAuliffe will call the legislature back to Richmond for a special session beginning March 24, to set the process in motion for again considering the state's spending plan for the remainder of FY14 and new budget for FY15 and FY16. The governor has indicated that he expects the session to last three weeks.

In the days leading up to the adjournment, it was apparent that no resolution to the impasse over House and Senate positions on health care funding/Medicaid expansion was in sight. Budget negotiators said they had reached agreement on a compromise budget for the remainder of FY14, and while dollar amount differences in the biennial budget were small, the huge divide over the Medicaid issue thwarted a compromise. The first few days of the special session likely will involve the introduction of new proposed spending plans, consideration by the respective House and Senate money committees and putting a budget bill into a conference committee so that any negotiations might continue.

Recall that the introduced budget for FY15/FY16 proposed \$5.57 billion for direct aid to public education in FY15 and \$5.62 billion in FY16. By comparison, the direct aid amount in FY14 is \$5.3 billion. Overall, the Senate-approved budget amendments added \$14.3 million in K-12 funding over the two years, while the House-backed proposal decreased funding by \$39.4 million.

**Education Legislation**

In the 2014 regular session's final days, the House and Senate agreed on bills that would reduce the number of Standards of Learning (SOL) tests in grades 3-8. The agreed upon provisions can be found in the conference reports for [HB 930](#) and [SB 306](#). The bills stipulate that SOL assessments administered in grades three through eight not exceed (a) reading and mathematics in grades three and four; (b) reading, mathematics and science in grade five; (c) reading and mathematics in grades six and seven; (d) reading, writing, mathematics and science in grade eight; and (e) Virginia Studies and Civics and Economics once each at the grade levels deemed appropriate by each local school board. Additionally, each school board shall annually certify that it has provided instruction and administered an alternative assessment, consistent with Board of Education (BOE) guidelines, to students in grades three through eight in SOL subject areas in which an SOL test was not administered during the school year. Finally, the bills include provisions for an SOL Innovation Committee to consist of legislators and education stakeholders, charged with periodically making recommendations to

the BOE and General Assembly on the SOL tests; student growth measures; alignment between the Standards of Learning, assessments and the School Performance Report Card; and ideas on innovative classroom teaching.

The House and Senate agreed to delay implementation of the A to F grading system for reporting individual school performance, slated to be in place this October pursuant to legislation adopted in 2013. The conference reports for [HB 1229](#) and [SB 324](#), which were adopted by both chambers, endorse a two-year delay. The House had wanted a one-year delay, while the Senate had backed a three-year delay. The approved bills also call for the BOE to develop, in conjunction with the House and Senate Education Committees, a plan for the school performance grading system. In developing the plan, the Board would consider the following: the standards of accreditation; state and federal accountability requirements; state mandated assessments; any assessment developed or approved for use by the relevant local school board; student growth indicators; student mobility; the experience and qualifications of staff; total cost and funding per pupil; and school safety. Public input on the plan would occur in summer of 2015, with the grading system to be finalized by December, 2015.

The conference report for [HB 134](#) and [SB 532](#) requires the Department of Education, by July 1, 2015, to review and update its Manual for Training Public School Employees in the Administration of Insulin and Glucagon to address training requirements for school personnel in the identification and management of symptoms of high and low blood glucose levels, the administration of medications to treat high and low blood glucose levels, the use of diabetes medication management devices, and the operation of glucose monitoring equipment. The Manual shall include training requirements in (i) administering a bolus of insulin via an insulin pump, (ii) entering a blood sugar reading into an insulin pump, (iii) entering a carbohydrate count into an insulin pump, (iv) removing or stopping the flow of insulin from an insulin pump, and (v) changing the battery in an insulin pump.

In its original form [HB 1242](#) required the tie-breaker of any elected school board to be elected in the same manner as the members of the school board; currently, tie-breakers for elected school boards are appointed by the school board. The Senate amended the bill to require that every elected school board have a tiebreaker. The compromise version, which was given final approval on the session's last day, keeps the position of tie-breaker as an option for county school boards to use for purposes of breaking tie votes, but requires such position to be elected.

### **E-mail Response**

Questions or seeking more information? Please [contact CEPI](#) if you have any questions or need additional information about the 2014 General Assembly.