

2010 Legislative Program Agenda VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Priority Items of Interest:	Board's Position
<p>1. Changes to the Composite Index - Annually, legislation is introduced to modify the Composite Index (CI), the formula the Commonwealth uses to determine a locality's state education funding through the local ability to pay. VBCPS believes that the CI accurately reflects a locality's ability to fund education. VBCPS opposes any changes to the Composite Index.</p>	Oppose
<p>2. Re-benchmarking of the Standards of Quality (SOQ) - In the summer of each odd-numbered year, the Direct Aid to public education budget is re-benchmarked for the next biennium. This re-benchmarking is part of the biennial budget development process that involves the Board of Education, the Governor, and the General Assembly. The re-benchmarked budget represents the state cost of continuing the existing Direct Aid to Public Education Programs with updates in the input data to determine the cost of the programs. The cost projections do not reflect any changes in policy or technical methodology. The Standards of Quality provide 88% of the state funds for public schools in Virginia.</p> <p>If the state lessens its commitment to K-12 education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Classes will be larger</i> • <i>Teacher turnover will increase and teacher quality will decrease</i> • <i>Programs will be cut</i> • <i>Real estate taxes will go up</i> <p>Since re-benchmarking is a process to update the state funding formulas to reflect the current costs facing school divisions (e.g. increases in fuel costs, health care costs, teacher salaries, etc.), failure to fully fund re-benchmarking would signify a decrease in the state's commitment to funding K-12 education. VBCPS supports <u>full funding</u> of the biennial re-benchmark of the SOQ funding formulas.</p>	Support
<p>3. 21st Century Initiatives - VBCPS supports statewide waivers permitting local divisions to implement reform measures in support of 21st Century Initiatives (i.e., creation of a balanced assessment system incorporating performance based assessments) as part of innovative schools/programs.</p> <p>The accountability system in Virginia is limited because the current State standardized tests are not designed to measure the higher-order thinking and 21st century skills students need to be successful in college and the workplace.</p> <p>In support of the division's new strategic plan, <i>Compass to 2015</i>, VBCPS requests greater flexibility from the State to be able to substitute current State mandated standardized tests administered at grades 4, 7, and 11 with performance-based assessments in order to promote and assess the teaching and learning of 21st century skills.</p>	Support
<p>4. School Calendar - VBCPS supports legislation that would provide local school divisions the authority to start the school year (no more than five days) prior to Labor Day when the first Monday of the month occurs during the second week in September.</p>	Support
<p>5. Uniform Grading Policy - VBCPS supports the convening of a state-wide task force to study the impact of a uniform grading policy in Virginia and provide recommendations to the State Board of Education. The task force shall make recommendations to the Board including, but not limited to, the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Consistent numerical breaks for letter grades</i> • <i>Consideration of standards to define an honors course</i> • <i>Methodology for appropriate weighting of courses</i> • <i>Determination of courses and weightings to be used in the calculation of class rank</i> 	Support
<p>6. Firearms on School Board Property - Provide the authority to local school boards to regulate firearms on all school board property, including administrative offices.</p>	Support