



Hanover County Public Schools Legislative Agenda 2017

Introduction

The School Board's *Legislative Agenda 2017* is adopted prior to the opening session of the Virginia General Assembly in January, 2017. Therefore, the legislative program is intended to reflect the sentiment of the Board on matters that could be addressed by the legislators, or those issues that recur from time to time on the General Assembly's agenda. As important legislative issues arise before or during the session of the Virginia General Assembly, the School Board may amend its legislative program or determine its position on particular bills.

The Board's primary avenue of affecting legislation and communicating its concern or support is through personal contact with Hanover County's representatives in the Virginia General Assembly – Delegate Hyland “Buddy” Fowler, Jr., Delegate Chris Peace, Senator Ryan McDougle, Senator Donald McEachin*, and Senator Siobhan Dunnivant. A strong working relationship, based on cooperation and mutual respect, has been demonstrated among these legislators and the School Board. The Board recognizes the important work of the General Assembly and is keenly aware of its effect on education in Hanover County and our Commonwealth.

Also, the Hanover County School Board recommends its legislative positions and recommendations on several important current or recurring topics on the national scene. The United States Congress adopts legislation of enormous impact and scope directly affecting education in Virginia and Hanover County. Therefore, the School Board deems it appropriate to communicate its local perspectives on certain issues of national interest to Senator Mark Warner and Senator Tim Kaine and Congressman Dave Brat**. The Board expresses its appreciation to these honored public servants for their personal commitment, dedication, and service to our country.

HANOVER COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

John F. Axselle III, Chairman
Susan P. Dibble, Vice Chairman
Roger S. Bourassa
Marla G. Coleman
Ola J. Hawkins
Robert L. Hundley, Jr.
Norman K. Sulser

Dr. Michael B. Gill, Superintendent of Schools

*Effective January 2017, Senator Donald McEachin will vacate his office and become a U.S. Congressman.

**Effective January 2017, Hanover County will become the First Congressional District of Virginia and therefore be represented by Congressman Robert “Rob” Wittman.

SECTION 1: STATE EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

The Hanover County School Board:

- Encourages the Virginia General Assembly to continue the examination and improvement of the state's current system of accountability to reflect the importance of a holistic education.
- Urges the Virginia General Assembly to fully fund the cost of implementing the Standards of Quality (SOQ). These costs should reflect the actual operating expenditures of local school divisions, including instructional and support costs.
- Requests removing the positions directly related to classroom instruction in the SOQ Support Position Cap or eliminate the cap on support position funding.
- Supports the funding of all positions identified in the Standards of Accreditation (SOA) by function rather than individual position description.
- Urges the state to increase funding in support of competitive salaries. Competitive wages support and enhance recruiting and retaining the best teachers for Hanover County.
- Supports additional legislative and regulatory requirements for public K-12 education only if they are reasonably cost effective, will result in demonstrable improvements to education to educational outcomes or student health and safety and are fully funded by the state on an ongoing basis.
- Supports moving the June Primary date to the third Tuesday in June. Doing so will mitigate issues related to student safety in schools used as voter precincts during these elections.
- Requests that the General Assembly appropriates adequate monies to fund its pro rata share of the required contributions for VRS benefits for state funded teacher salaries and that the State make its contributions directly to VRS so that the State liability will be accurately reported under applicable accounting standards.

SECTION II: NATIONAL EDUCATION ISSUES

The Hanover County School Board:

- Urges the federal government to fully fund the additional costs and requirements accruing to local school divisions for the implementation of federal accountability.
- Urges the federal government to fully fund IDEIA 2004. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 1975 indicated that the federal government would fund 40 percent of the cost of educating children with disabilities. Approximately 90 percent of the funding for special education comes from local and state taxpayer dollars. The United States Congress funded an estimated 10 percent of special education costs – less than 40% of its obligation.

Special education costs vary considerably on a case by case basis. In Hanover's most recent excess cost report, the average annual cost to educate a non-special education student was \$7,545; the average cost to educate a special education student in the same year was \$14,286 — an additional amount of \$6,741 per pupil to meet special education needs.