

RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE FUNDING OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN VIRGINIA

_____ SCHOOL BOARD

WHEREAS, the General Assembly shall provide for a system of free public elementary and secondary schools for all children of school age throughout the Commonwealth, and shall seek to ensure that an educational program of high quality is established and continually maintained (Virginia Constitution, Article VIII, Section 1); and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly shall determine the manner in which funds are to be provided for the cost of maintaining an educational program meeting the prescribed standards of quality, and shall provide for the apportionment of the cost of such program between the Commonwealth and the local units of government comprising such school divisions. (Virginia Constitution, Article VIII, Section 2); and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly shall provide for the support of public education as set forth in Article VIII, Section 1 of the Constitution of Virginia which states that the General Assembly and the Board of Education find that the quality of education is dependent upon the provision of (i) the appropriate working environment, benefits, and salaries necessary to ensure the availability of high-quality instructional personnel; (ii) the appropriate learning environment designed to promote student achievement; (iii) quality instruction that enables each student to become a productive and educated citizen of Virginia and the United States of America; and (iv) the adequate commitment of other resources. In keeping with this goal, the (Standards of Quality, 22.1-253.13:1, Standard 1); and

WHEREAS, increased funding for public education is needed to ensure that the state meets its responsibility to provide public education as a core function of state government and to promote economic development in Virginia (VASS Blueprint for Public Education); and

WHEREAS, Virginia public schools in challenging environments are almost entirely located in high poverty areas with unemployment that far exceeds the state average and low per-capita family incomes. (VSBA Task Force on Schools in Challenging Environments); and

WHEREAS, Virginia's state aid to public education has been declining since the 2009 recession with State direct aid K-12 appropriations currently at \$6.8 billion (all funds)/\$5.2 billion (GF) compared to \$7.1 billion (all funds)/\$5.6 billion (GF) in FY2009.

WHEREAS, State K-12 funding reductions have reduced K-12 funding from 35 percent of the general fund in FY 2009 to below 30 percent in FY 2014 and beyond; and

WHEREAS, Virginia continues to provide for special interest tax preferences and loopholes, while reducing its financial obligation to public education; and

WHEREAS, the state's reduction in funding for K-12 has occurred through policy changes since FY 2009, such as reduced state funds for school "support" personnel and administrative and employee benefits; and

WHEREAS, the voters of Virginia in 1987 approved the establishment of a state-operated Lottery for the purpose of providing funding for public education and further approved a constitutional amendment in 2000 which required Lottery proceeds to be distributed to localities to spend for public education purposes. Instead of additional resources for public education, 100% of Lottery proceeds now supplant general fund revenues to support public education; and

WHEREAS, localities have paid for the increased costs of education required by state mandates to improve public school performance with localities currently paying 56 percent of the state v. local share of public education rather than the 45 percent they should be paying as defined by the Standards of Quality; and

WHEREAS, localities budgeted \$3.55 billion in FY2013 above their state required local effort (RLE) to maintain the actual costs of public education (Annual Superintendents Report to the Department of Education); and

WHEREAS, real estate values in Virginia and, therefore, local government revenues continue to be depressed in Virginia - increasing only 2 percent in fiscal year 2013 – with little prospect for even average growth rates in future years without significant local tax rate increases; and

WHEREAS, the number of at-risk students in Virginia schools has significantly increased to the point where more than one-third of K-12 students are now free lunch-eligible and seven percent reduced-price lunch eligible, thereby increasing the need for more personnel and material resources to help them; and

WHEREAS, we believe our state's future prosperity relies on a high-quality education system that prepares students for college and careers, and that without it, Virginia's economic competitiveness and ability to attract new business will falter; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE _____ School Board and its division superintendent, in conjunction with the Virginia School Boards Association and the Virginia Association of School Superintendents, call upon the Virginia General Assembly to immediately increase the state's share of funding for public education to the level of quality that is prescribed by them in the Standards of Quality and expected by all of the Commonwealth's citizens.