

VIRGINIA PUBLIC EDUCATION COALITION

Public education for all children must be a priority in allocating resources. Those resources must also be adequate to support the demands on school districts today in preparing students for their futures. Diversion of public resources away from public education only weakens Virginia's ability to grow the workforce needed for Virginia's new economy.

Today's economic realities and the need for all students to be prepared for tomorrow's demands challenge Virginia to reconsider its investment in public education. The Virginia Chamber of Commerce Blueprint 2014 included the goal of having a nationally ranked education system that prepares the world's best workforce.

In order for Virginia's students to reach their full potential, support for public education must align with expected outcomes. This can be accomplished by supporting public education students and those who dedicate their lives to students. In addition, the success of public schools should not be measured by standardized assessments alone. Supporting all students' growth and development over time builds the foundation on which they become enlightened, engaged, and productive citizens. Consider the following spotlights that are critical to promoting public education:

Spotlight on Students

- Supplant standardized tests with more effective assessments that encourage student acquisition and application of deeper knowledge and skills.
- Provide support of time and resources for school districts to implement internships, on-the-job training, and apprenticeships.
- Encourage teacher autonomy and the creative delivery of content in the classroom.
- Provide resources that are directed toward equity in Virginia school districts and for children in poverty.

Spotlight on Educators

- Establish short-range and long-term strategies to improve the attraction/retention of educators.
- Establish a plan for Virginia to be above the national average in teacher compensation.
- Provide time and resources to implement quality professional development that is job-embedded and encourages peer-to-peer support.
- Support a flexible calendar and local autonomy in the use of time for school districts to develop and implement quality curricula.

Spotlight on the Community

- Invest in workforce readiness through programs and resources proven to be successful.
- Challenge businesses to partner with school districts to strengthen local workforce.
- Provide opportunities for creating school-community partnerships and for engaging families.
- Direct all appropriated funding toward public education governed by local school boards.

Spotlight on the Future

- Support the work to redesign public education by the State Board and its transition to a new accreditation model.
- Establish policies that bridge public education and higher education.
- Establish policies that bridge public education and the business community.
- Appropriately fund public education in Virginia while considering the importance of equity and the needs of schools with high poverty.

The members of the Virginia Public Education Coalition do not expect lawmakers to have all the answers. VPEC does believe that constructive dialogue between elected state representatives and those of us who represent education organizations is key to understanding the needs of public education and its role in Virginia's economic development.

*Virginia Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals
Virginia Association of School Superintendents
Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals
Virginia School Boards Association
Virginia Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development*

*Virginia Counselors Association
Virginia Education Association
Virginia Middle School Association
Virginia Congress of Parents and Teachers
Virginia School Counselor Association*

Adopted May 15, 2017