



CRITICAL STAFFING SHORTAGE & STANDARDS

Virginia PTA urges the General Assembly to uphold their constitutional duty by funding education based on the Virginia Board of Education's prescribed Standards of Quality and actual staffing practices in order to provide equitable learning opportunities for all students and address the shortage of teachers and critical school staff.

- Lift the Support Cap: Lift the 2009 recession-era Support Position Cap. Support staff are needed to balance teacher workload and provide critical student services.
- Fund the Standards of Quality: Essential staff should be prescribed for every school.
 - *Unified Mental Health Teams* at nationally recommended ratios
 - *Professional School Nurse* for every school
 - *Full time principal* for every elementary school
 - *Full time librarian and technology teacher* for every elementary school
- Funding & Staffing for Low Income Schools: (At Risk Add-On) Address inequitable learning opportunities faced by our most vulnerable students.

SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

Quality of school buildings is a health, safety, educational, and environmental equity issue for families and communities, which needs dedicated funding.

- Building Modernization: Dedicated funding for renovation, new construction, and debt service costs to meet modern health and technology standards.
- Electric School Buses: Dedicated funding, grants, and incentive programs that enable school districts to purchase electric school buses and install charging stations and electric transportation infrastructure.
- Solar Panels for Schools: Increase access to clean energy solutions by removing net metering limits and barriers that limit school district's use of Power Purchase Agreements.

INTERNET ACCESS & AFFORDABILITY

To close the digital divide, it's imperative that every Virginia student have a school provided laptop and access to affordable, high-speed (100/20Mbps) broadband.

- Fund Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) to provide families with high-speed fixed broadband (instead of school provided mobile broadband).
- Provide each student and teacher with a laptop or device that supports instruction.
- Streamline utilization of federal funds through state programs and utilize school to home communication to raise awareness of affordability programs.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION & CHILDCARE

Education received during the first five years of a child's life is important to a child's long-term academic success. Reliable, high-quality, affordable child-care also enables families to work and earn an income.

- Funding and programs that expand access to pre-school for at-risk three- and four-year old children.
- Programs, funding, and initiatives that improve and expand childcare affordability for all families.
- Communication about the measures of quality for childcare that enables families to make informed choices, provides feedback to teachers, and is indicative of positive child outcomes.
- Support evidenced-based, integrated, and comprehensive curriculum for early childhood education
- Support programs and funding for ongoing training and retention of early childcare teachers.
- Supports legislation that provides families with paid, flexible sick and leave policies to care for children.

STANDARDIZED TESTING & ASSESSMENTS

Accountability systems that provide multiple measures of student growth and achievement provide valuable information to students, families, teachers, and school leaders to guide new instruction.

- Support an assessment system that accommodates the needs of all students and allows remote testing.
- Support reduction in testing to the federal minimum and removal of the mandated mid-year assessment.
- Support communication to students and parents regarding how to leverage growth assessments, as well as direct communication to parents about school-wide assessment results and academic goals.
- Support development of materials and training that allows teachers to leverage growth assessments and identify potential learning gaps as part of new instruction.

LITERACY INSTRUCTION

Reading is foundational to student academic success. Virginia should implement a comprehensive statewide approach to literacy that relies on scientifically-based reading research and uses evidence-based practices for instruction, intervention, and assessments.

- Support scientifically-based reading instruction, screening and intervention methods that are evidence-based, explicit, systematic, sequential, and cumulative.
- Support teacher preparation, professional development, and funding for reading specialists and literacy coaches to facilitate a migration to teaching foundational, evidence-based early literacy skills in a systematic, explicit, and cumulative way.
- Support communication, resources and programs that help families understanding reading assessment results and support reading instruction at home.

CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Career Technical Education programs prepare students for high wage, high skill, and high demand careers in existing and emerging industries, while meeting the Commonwealth's need for well-trained and industry-certified technical workers.

- Support funding CTE programs, including registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs, expansion of career education pathways, and market-driven compensation for CTE instructors.
- Support communication and programs that celebrate and encourage participation in CTE programs.

SCHOOL SAFETY

School violence and disciplinary problems have escalated as students return to the classroom. Students and educators have a right to attend schools that are safe and conducive to learning and achievement.

- Support Memorandums of Understanding with local law enforcement agencies, training programs for School Resource Officers, and funding for SRO grant programs.
- Support funding to research the causes and effects of gun violence on youth and communities
- Support funding to implement evidence-based strategies and increased mental health resources to reduce bullying, school violence, and shootings.

FOOD SECURITY & SCHOOL NUTRITION

Proper nutrition is imperative to the health, development, and academic achievement of children. An estimated 445,000 additional Virginians are experiencing food insecurity because of the impacts of COVID-19.

- Support continuation of the free school meal program for all students.
- Support high school meal nutrition standards and discontinuing competitive food sales at mealtimes.
- Support expanding access to school meals by including daily offerings that are inclusive of dietary, religious, or cultural meal options.
- Support inclusion of students, parents, and school staff on school meal and wellness committees.
- Expand access to grants, incentives, and staffing that enables schools to increase locally grown food served in school cafeterias, expand rural work-force education, and provide hands-on learning in school gardens.