

# 2025 PRIORITIES



**Virginia**  
**PTA**  
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## FUND ACTUAL COST OF EDUCATION

*Virginia's outdated funding formula underestimates the staffing needed to serve Virginia's students, uses recession-era caps to limit funding, and fails to adequately account for the true costs of educating students at-risk due to poverty, special education or limited English proficiency. Virginia's over-reliance on local governments to fund a high-quality education has fueled inequities across the commonwealth, a shortage of fully licensed teachers, and contributes to achievement gaps.*

- **Fully Eliminate Support Cap**

[HB1831 \(Simonds\)](#) / [SB1236 \(Aird\)](#)  
[125#2h \(Bulova\)](#) / [125#13s \(Boysko\)](#)

Support staff are essential school-based staff that provide academic and social emotional support for students, balance teacher workload and maintain a safe, clean school. The current cap (24:1,000) reduces overall basic aid, which limits school division flexibility to meet instructional and operational needs.

- **Create Add-On for Special Education**

[125#5h \(Coyner\)/125#11s \(Favola\)](#)  
[125#3h \(Rasoul\) - Support Cap w/ Special Ed Add-On](#)

Students with disabilities often need specialized teachers, smaller class sizes, therapy sessions, individualized learning, and assistive technology. State funding should reflect the actual costs of providing a high-quality education.

- **Correct Outdated Formulas as recommended by JLARC**

[HB1954 \(Rasoul\)/](#) [SB977 \(Hashmi\)](#)

Implement immediate action recommendations made by the 2023 JLARC study including using school division staffing ratios, division average salaries and including Add-On funding in the SOQ for At Risk, English Learner, and Special Education.

## ACCOUNTABILITY & ASSESSMENTS

*The new VDOE Accountability & Performance Framework includes a new unnecessary 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade performance task test not tied to SOL curriculum, evaluates middle schools based on high school coursework, and includes ELL test results prior to English proficiency. VDOE staffing is also inadequate to provide substantive academic improvement to schools identified as "Off-Track" or "Needs Intensive Support".*

- **Funding & Support for Schools Performing Below Standard**

[SB820 \(Favola\)](#)

Targeted funding for schools identified as 'Off Track' or 'Needs Intensive Support'.

- **Reduce Testing:**

Support assessments that measure growth and inform instruction. Support eliminating high-stakes testing, and performance tests not tied to SOLs.

- **Accessible Performance Reporting:**

Support School Quality Profiles translated into most commonly spoken languages and use of accessibility features.

- **Translated SOLs:**

Support testing in languages other than English. [HB1679 \(Cohen\)/](#)  
[SB753 \(Favola\)](#)

- **Support High Quality Instructional Materials**

[HB2291 \(Coyner\)](#) / [SB955 \(VanValkenburg\)](#)

Support development of high-quality instructional materials, and professional learning to identify/implement textbooks and high-quality instructional materials.

- **Adequate Implementation Timeline:**

[HB2118 \(Keys-Gamarra\)](#) / [SB979 \(Hashmi\)](#)

New framework is not complete. Support realistic timeline for rollout.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

*Virginia's special education funding formula is based on a complex formula incorporating student counts, level of need, and caseload maximums. The caseload maximums have not been overhauled for at least 25 years. Local governments pay for 69% of the costs of educating students with disabilities with state funding only covering 15% of special education aide positions. JLARC estimates there's a \$480M gap in state special education funding.*

- Special Education Add-On Funding:** [125#5h \(Coyner\)/125#11s \(Favola\)](#)  
[125#3h \(Rasoul\) - Support Cap w/ Special Ed Add-On](#)  
 State should improve contribution by creating an Add-On funding supplement based student need establishing a 6% add-on for Level 1 services and 12% add-on for Level 2 services.
- Statewide Individualized Education Program (IEP) System** [118#2h \(Coyner\)](#) / [118#3s \(Favola\)](#)  
 Support a statewide IEPs to create consistency and transparency in IEP writing, implementation, and monitoring. Upgrades needed for parent portal, translation, progress tracking, and performance dashboard.
- Professional Development/Certification:**  
 Support training teachers/IEP teams in SPED instruction, co-teaching, IEPs, applied studies diploma, and transition.

## SCHOOL SAFETY & VIOLENCE PREVENTION

*Students and educators have a right to attend schools that are safe and conducive to learning and achievement.*

- Staffing, Building Improvements, After-School Programs & Research:**  
 Support evidence-based strategies, physical building improvements, trained School Resource Offices, after-school programs and mental health resources to reduce bullying, school violence, shootings, and substance abuse.
- Parent Engagement:** School districts should seek parental input when developing best practices related to threats of school violence. Agreed upon policies should be public and accessible to all families.  
[Fentanyl Overdose Notices \(24hrs\): HB2287 \(Coyner\) | HB2424 \(Higgins\) / SB1240 \(Sturtevant\)](#)
- Communication:** [Safe Opioid & Firearm Storage: HB1678 \(Cohen\) | SB1048 \(Pekarsky\)](#)  
 Parents should receive swift, transparent notification in case of threats and resources to aid families in age-appropriate follow-up with their students.

## SOCIAL MEDIA, STUDENT DATA, & CELL PHONE ACCESS

*Student laptops, digital learning in K-12 classrooms, on-line research sources, and prevalent cell phone and social media use raises new concerns about youth data privacy, on-line safety, and youth mental health. Parents and students should have ability to easily monitor and control their data, privacy, and security settings.*

- Support parental input and local authority in the development of cell phone policies regulating the use of personal electronic devices during school hours.
- Support prohibiting the sale of student data, and/or its use to target advertising to students/families.
- Support raising the age for parental consent from 13 to 16 and expanding protections for children on-line to include mobile applications and ability for students and parents to delete youth content.
- Support professional development for educators and administrators on handling student data.
- Support clear, accessible, easy to read privacy policies provided to families & students as well as information on data lifecycle management including destruction of stale data and data breaches.

[Advanced Math Identification: HB2686 \(Calsen\)](#)  
[Middle School Math Innovation Program: 120 #4s \(Durant\)](#)  
[Office of Math Improvement: HB1829 \(Simonds\) / SB978 \(Hashmi\)](#)

## MATH & LITERACY INSTRUCTION

*Reading and Math proficiency are foundational to student academic success. Scientifically-based research and evidence-based practices for instruction, intervention, and assessments are essential for success in reading and math. High-quality teachers, curriculum, and materials are essential to supporting instruction and academic achievement.*

- **Math Specialists:** Support funding for Math Specialists and Coaches as well as math micro-credentialing program to improve math instruction and achievement.
- **Math Access & Pathways:** Improve identification and expand counseling to communicate math pathways
- **Family Engagement Programs:** Support programs that raise awareness of evidence-based literacy and math instruction, intervention, and assessment practices.

## FOOD SECURITY & SCHOOL NUTRITION

*Proper nutrition is imperative to the health, development, and academic achievement of children. More than 590,000 students rely on free/reduced-price meals and many face food insecurity in the evening and on weekends.*

- **Free Breakfast for All Students** [HB1958 \(Bennett-Parker\)](#) | [SB1003 \(Roem\)](#)  
Provide a healthy start to the school day while reducing child hunger, stigma, and paperwork. Through the federal community eligibility program 70% of Virginia's students already receive free meals. Breakfast improves attendance, comprehension, behavior and test scores.
- **Centralized Local Procurement Program** [120#1h \(Rasoul\)](#) | [120#2s \(Perry\)](#)  
Enables 700 schools across 61 school divisions to purchase Virginia grown foods from more than 80 farmers through regional food hubs.
- **Fresh, High-Quality Scratch-Cooked Meals:** Support infrastructure funding to modernize equipment in school cafeterias and provide training programs to increase meals that meet dietary and cultural preferences and that are scratch-cooked using whole, fresh, and/or minimally processed ingredients.
- **Wellness Committees:** Support inclusion of students, parents, and school staff on school meal and wellness committees.

## MENTAL HEALTH

*Virginia ranks 48th nationally in providing access to mental health care for youth, and suicide is the second leading cause of death for 10-24 year olds. Ninety-one percent of Virginians live in an area with a shortage of mental health professionals resulting in 60% of Virginia's youth with major depression not receiving treatment.*

- **Community Partners, Tele-Mental Health & Innovation:** [Telehealth Access: HB1945 \(Reaser\) / SB1037 \(Pekarsky\)](#)  
Support flexible funding programs that enable to schools to partner with community-based mental health providers and expand access to tele-mental health services, Crisis Receiving Centers, and Recovery High Schools.
- **Staffing:** Fund Unified Mental Health teams at nationally recommended ratios of (1:250) for school counselors; (1:500) for psychologists; and (1:250) for social workers and/or support staff at (4:1,000)

## SCHOOL BUILDING QUALITY

*Building quality and access to the internet impacts student success. More than half of Virginia's school buildings are over 50 years old. 22% are not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. 40% are at or above capacity. 5% lack sufficient broadband. Dedicated state funding is needed meet modern health & safety standards.*

- Provide all counties and cities with the ability to impose a local sales and use tax up to one percent to fund the construction or renovation of schools if such levy is approved in a voter referendum.
- Dedicated funding and Standards of Quality are needed for school building renovation and new school construction in order to meet modern health, safety, instructional, and technology standards.

## 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.

## 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.*

- **Access:** Support funding/programs that expand access to pre-school for at-risk 3–4 year old children.
- **Affordability:** Support programs and funding that improves and expands childcare affordability.
- **Reporting:** Support reporting on measures of quality for childcare that enables families to make informed choices, provides feedback to teachers, and is indicative of positive child outcomes.
- **High -Quality:** Support evidenced-based, integrated, and comprehensive early childhood curriculum.
- **Retention:** Support programs and funding for ongoing training and retention of early childcare teachers.

*Virginia PTA is the oldest and largest non-partisan, child advocacy volunteer association in Virginia with more than 130,000 members who are committed to building family to school partnerships and advocating for the academic success, health and well-being of all children. As the leader in supporting local school parent groups, Virginia PTA strengthens Virginia's schools and communities by providing non-profit technical support, leadership training, family engagement toolkits, student recognition, advocacy tools and parent education resources for approximately 900 school communities across Virginia.*