Fairfax County School Board 2027 State Priorities Discussion Draft

The Fairfax County School Board (FCSB) believes that public education should be based on a strong partnership between the Commonwealth and local school divisions. This includes the state fairly sharing in the true costs of implementing a locally based and student-centered high-quality public education system and avoiding policy actions that impose unfunded mandates on local school divisions. While understanding the state's role, the supervision of schools and flexibility in policy implementation should remain with local school boards per the Virginia Constitution.

The FCSB supports:

State Funding

~~Fully funding the biennial rebenchmark of Standards of Quality funding formulas.~~

Addressing SOQ funding formula inadequacies by adopting the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission's (JLARC's) education funding recommendations, including:

- The elimination of remaining Great Recession-era cost reduction measures.
- Calculating prevailing costs using division averages instead of weighted averages.
- Addressing cost-of-living disparities across the state by replacing the existing cost of competing adjustment (COCA) with a Virginia labor cost index, or at least fully funding the existing COCA.

Accountability

A state accountability system that fairly assesses school performance based on balanced measures of student achievement, student academic progress, engagement, and outcomes toward college and workforce readiness goals. The Standards should adequately account for the diverse learning needs of all Virginia students and the time required for certain students to graduate.

Assessment

Shifting away from standardized assessments and toward a more balanced state assessment system based on the principles of universal assessment design, including:

- Performance-based assessments that inform instruction.
- Native language assessments where appropriate for English Learners.

Additional Standards of Learning (SOL) assessment administration and timing flexibility, including:

- SOL assessment administration within at least the last three weeks of course completion.
- ~~Clarifying continued access to Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate assessments.~~
- Limiting required SOL assessments to those necessary for federal accountability or to verify credits for graduation.
- Flexibility in whether and how SOL tests inform classroom grades.
- ~~Continued flexibility for alternatives to the Virginia Growth Assessment (VGA), or elimination of the VGA.~~

College and Workforce Readiness

Adding credit for work experience, maintaining industry credentials, and providing more flexibility for completing work-based learning opportunities.

Facilities

Flexible state resources for school divisions to implement facility and infrastructure improvements, including resources to address HVAC issues.

School Meals

Additional state resources to expand the availability of free meals in schools.

Freedom of Information Act

Reforms to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act to address:

- The proliferation of records associated with electronic communications.

- The disparity in the impact of open meeting rules on public bodies of different sizes.
- The expense of posting public notices.

~~Educational Governance~~
~~Reforms to ensure the Virginia Board of Education and the Boards of Visitors of Virginia's public universities have stable, consistent, and student focused leadership.~~