

RPS 2019 DRAFT Legislative Agenda

The RPS 2019 Legislative Agenda is based on the *Goals and Priorities* adopted in **Dreams4RPS**, the division's 2018-2023 Strategic Plan.

RPS needs more state support of public education to provide better schools to make our students stronger and this Agenda strongly supports Goal 10: **Increase funding from local, state, federal, and philanthropic sources.**

Progress in securing increased funding from the Commonwealth will help provide the resources to achieve 100% full accreditation (Goal 1) and increase student, family, and staff satisfaction (Goal 6).

Many other localities, school boards, and partner organizations will be working on items in this Agenda. RPS will strategically partner and align with others to strengthen our message to the General Assembly. We will support the legislative platform of the Virginia School Boards Association and Virginia Association of School Superintendents, and will partner with aligned organizations to garner support for any legislative positions exclusively advocated for by RPS.

The draft agenda below contains the following details and recommendations:

- General policy position
- Recommended position
 - **Initiate** - RPS will request/ensure introduction via member of Richmond delegation.
 - **Support** - RPS will actively support the efforts of other organizations.
 - **Monitor** - RPS will closely monitor efforts in this area and strategically advocate for outcomes that align to RPS goals.
- Alignment with specific actions in Dreams4RPS
- Possible Fiscal Impact
- Further policy proposal details.



1. Fund 2016 Board of Education SOQ Recommendations

The Virginia Board of Education recommended \$600 million in SOQ upgrades in 2016, including:

1. Restore funding of support positions by eliminating the 2009 support position cap (1 support per 4.17 SOQ teachers).
2. Lower assistant principal ratio to 1:400 students.
3. Fully fund one full-time principal in each elementary school (schools under 299 students only receive partial funding).
4. Lower staffing ratios for school counselors to (1:250), school psychologists (1:1000), school nurses (1:1000), and school social workers (1:1000).

<i>Recommended Position:</i>	Initiate/Support Budget Amendments
<i>Supports Dreams4RPS:</i>	<p>Action 3.3 – Increase the number of staff providing mental health and social supports by at least 25% and ensure that all schools have a nurse.</p> <p>Action 2.3 – Redesign our compensation system to ensure that: 1) RPS teachers are paid at, or above, the Virginia average; 2) RPS teachers serving in our highest-priority schools are the highest paid in the Commonwealth; and 3) all roles have a clear and consistent salary progression, year over year.</p> <p>Action 5.4 – Implement an equity-based funding formula that ensures that schools that need the most actually receive the most.</p>
<i>Possible Fiscal Impact:</i>	<p>State: \$600 million</p> <p>RPS: Approx. 1.9% of state appropriation = \$11.4 million</p>

2. Increase “At-Risk Add-on”

Schools in high-poverty communities receive roughly 8.3% less funding per student (state, local, and federal combined) than schools in the wealthiest areas of the Commonwealth, yet studies show it costs 25-30% more to educate at-risk students.

The At-Risk Add-On supports programs for students who are educationally at risk. Based on its percentage of free lunch eligibility, each school division receives between 1% and 14% in additional basic aid per free lunch-eligible student. School divisions may use these funds for teacher recruitment programs and incentives, additional school counselors, dropout prevention, community-based and school-based truancy officer programs, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), Project Discovery, Reading Recovery, programs for students who speak English as a second language, or programs related to increasing the success of disadvantaged students in completing a high school degree.

<i>Recommended Position:</i>	Introduce/Support Budget Amendments
<i>Supports Dreams4RPS:</i>	Action 5.4 – Implement an equity-based funding formula that ensures that schools that need the most actually receive the most.
<i>Cost and RPS Impact:</i>	State: Per 1% Increase = \$7.1 million, up to \$113.6 million at 30% RPS: 6% of state appropriation = \$426,000 (1%) to \$6.8 million (30%)

The Governor’s amended budget proposes an additional \$21.1 million in fiscal year 2019 and an additional \$14.3 million in fiscal year 2020. The amendment is based on increasing the add-on from 13% to 16% in fiscal year 2019 and from 14% to 16% in fiscal year 2020.

Further increases to this funding stream could be proposed at any level:

%	State Increase	Approximate RPS Impact
1-20%	\$42.6 million	\$2.6 million
1-25%	\$78.1 million	\$4.7 million
1-30%	\$113.6 million	\$6.8 million

3. Increase K-3 Primary Class Size Reduction Funding

The state provides funding to reduce K-3 class sizes. Payments are based on whichever of the following is lower: 1) the statewide average per pupil cost; or 2) the actual division per pupil cost. Language in the budget amendment would make payments based on the actual division per pupil cost. This is helpful to RPS as Richmond has a higher average per pupil cost.

<i>Recommended Position:</i>	Monitor/Support Budget Amendments
<i>Supports Dreams4RPS:</i>	Action 5.4 – Implement an equity-based funding formula that ensures that schools that need the most actually receive the most.
<i>Cost and RPS Impact:</i>	Indeterminate - RPS currently receives 5% of total state appropriations, currently \$6.5 million (FY20).

Of note: the Governor’s proposed budget reduces funding for K-3 Primary Class Size Reduction by approximately \$5.4 million in fiscal year 2019 and \$2.4 million in fiscal year 2020.

4. Support Teacher Compensation, Recruitment, and Recognition

In addition to teacher compensation, there are a number of teacher related programs to support with increased funding and direction to at-risk school divisions. A dedicated effort needs to be sustained to raise teacher salaries to at least the national average. The state should also play a part in encouraging recruitment and retention of high-quality, diverse individuals to teach in at-risk schools through innovative programs, scholarships, loans, and incentive grants.

<i>Recommended Position:</i>	Introduce/Support Budget Amendments
<i>Supports Dreams4RPS:</i>	<p>Action 2.2 – Launch an effort explicitly focused on increasing and retaining the number of male teachers of color in RPS.</p> <p>Action 2.3 – Redesign our compensation system to ensure that: 1) RPS teachers are paid at, or above, the Virginia average; 2) RPS teachers serving in our highest-priority schools are the highest paid in the Commonwealth; and 3) all roles have a clear and consistent salary progression, year over year.</p> <p>Action 2.8 – Collaborate with the City of Richmond and the Commonwealth of Virginia to implement incentives for top educators to come to, and stay in, RVA, including housing credits, tax credits, and tuition reimbursement.</p> <p>Action 5.4 – Implement an equity-based funding formula that ensures that schools that need the most actually receive the most.</p>
<i>Possible Fiscal Impact:</i>	See notes below.

Teacher Salaries - The Governor’s amended budget increases the state share of the Compensation Supplement for funded SOQ instructional and support personnel in fiscal year 2020 from 3% to 5%. The Compensation Supplement has an effective date of July 1, 2019, and provides the state share of a 5% Compensation Supplement for funded SOQ instructional positions and support personnel, Academic Year Governor’s Schools, and Regional Alternative Education Programs.

\$218.2 million is provided for the state share of a 5% salary increase effective July 1, 2019 to school divisions which certify to the VDOE by June 1, 2019, that salary increases of a minimum average of 5% have been or will have been provided to instructional and support personnel during the 2018-2020 biennium, either in the first year or in the second year or through a combination of the two years.

Master Teacher Residency Program - For FY20, \$1.5 million has been appropriated for teacher residency programs (which would support the current RPS/VCU Master Teacher Residency Program). We should advocate to double that.

STEM Teacher Incentives - Currently, STEM teachers who serve in hard-to-staff schools can receive \$5,000 incentive awards (up to \$15k over 4 years of service). We should consider advocating for an increased incentive amount and/or more years of eligibility.

4. Support Teacher Compensation, Recruitment, and Recognition

Virginia Teacher Scholarship Loan Program - Eligible students receive an annual scholarship of \$10,000 if they teach for two years in a critical shortage subject and in a school with a free and reduced lunch population of 50 percent or greater. We should consider advocating for additional funds to support such students who serve in divisions under an MOU with the VDOE.

Teacher Stipend Program - Propose new program to award stipends to highly-effective teachers in high-poverty schools. Supported by VML.

Grow Your Own Teacher Pilot - The Governor's amended budget proposes new spending of \$0.2 million in fiscal year 2020 for the Grow Your Own Teacher pilot program. VDOE will provide scholarships no greater than \$7,500 to high school graduates that attend a Virginia state institution of higher learning and subsequently teach in a high-need public school within their division of residence. School divisions apply for funds on behalf of students who: 1) graduated from a public high school in the local school division; 2) was eligible for free or reduced price lunch throughout the applicant's attendance at a public high school in the local school division; and 3) commits to teach, within three years of graduating from a Virginia state institution of higher learning, in the school division at a public high school where at least 50.0 percent of students qualify for free or reduced price lunch at the time of application, for a period of at least four years. Payments will be made to the Virginia institution of higher learning by VDOE on behalf of the student. VDOE may recover all or part of the funds awarded if the student does not satisfy the teaching obligation.

Support for Provisionally Licensed Minority Teachers - The Governor's amended budget adds the Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment to the allowable tests for which grants may be awarded to school divisions, teacher preparation programs, or nonprofit organizations in the Northern Virginia, Central Virginia, and Hampton Roads regions to subsidize test fees and the cost of tutoring for provisionally licensed minority teachers seeking full licensure in Virginia.



5. Increase Lottery Allocation and Support School Construction

Increase use of lottery funds for non-recurring operating expenses and capital improvements and establish a new, predictable, and meaningful source of funding for facilities, including funding for new construction, renovation, maintenance, and land purchase. Current lottery allocation to local school divisions is 40%. In 2019, the General Assembly should increase the allocation to 45%. Ultimately, all lottery proceeds should be provided to local school divisions instead of supplanting state general funds for the state share of education costs.

<i>Recommended Position:</i>	Introduce/Support Budget Amendments
<i>Supports Dreams4RPS:</i>	Action 5.4 – Implement an equity-based funding formula that ensures that schools that need the most actually receive the most.
<i>Possible Fiscal Impact:</i>	Indeterminate

The current use of the Literary Fund and the Virginia Public School Authority are not sufficient means for the state to help localities pay for capital needs. Some options include:

- Restore prior use of Literary Fund for capital projects by funding teachers’ VRS payments through GF.
- Create a two-year pilot program of competitive grants using funds from the Virginia Public Building Authority to offset new construction or renovation costs for publicly owned and operated K-12 schools.
- Use of internet sales tax.

The Governor’s amended budget proposes an increase to the Supplemental Lottery Per Pupil Amount in fiscal years 2019 and 2020, from \$336.08 per pupil to \$364.15 per pupil in fiscal year 2019, and from \$341.96 per pupil to \$367.44 per pupil in fiscal year 2020. This action increases state funding to school divisions by \$18.5 million in fiscal year 2019 and by \$16.2 million in fiscal year 2020. The increase to the estimate for Lottery proceeds in fiscal years 2019 and 2020 funds the increases to the per pupil amounts.

6. Study of Funding the True Cost of Education and LCI Reform

The Commonwealth’s education funding formulae (SOQ and LCI) overburden localities. A comprehensive independent study of these formulae and the true cost of education is necessary.

<i>Recommended Position:</i>	Support Legislation/Budget Amendments
<i>Supports Dreams4RPS:</i>	<p>Action 2.3 – Redesign our compensation system to ensure that: 1) RPS teachers are paid at, or above, the Virginia average; 2) RPS teachers serving in our highest-priority schools are the highest paid in the Commonwealth; and 3) all roles have a clear and consistent salary progression, year over year.</p> <p>Action 5.4 – Implement an equity-based funding formula that ensures that schools that need the most actually receive the most.</p>
<i>Possible Fiscal Impact:</i>	Not applicable

The state Standards of Quality (SOQ) funding formula is supposed to break down as 55% state/45% local. In reality, localities pay much more (\$3.5 billion). The SOQ formula does not recognize the true costs of education, including pupil transportation, school support staff, broadband and other technology, and adequate instructional staff salaries. Neither does it recognize most construction and renovation costs. Local governments match double what is required for basic state education dollars, pay the majority of public school capital costs, and struggle to find scarce local tax dollars to keep up with the demands for meeting expanding state requirements to create 21st Century learning environments.

The local composite index (LCI) is a crude and often inaccurate proxy for determining the ability of each locality to pay its share of K-12 expenses as defined by the SOQ. It does not properly reflect the additional demands on urban, high-density localities that have significant other human service and infrastructure needs. RPS should support a study to evaluate several factors that could improve the equity of the LCI formula.

7. VPI: Increase Per-Pupil Funding and Fund 3-Year Old Expansion Pilot

As of 2017, the nationwide preschool enrollment rate was 32%. In Virginia, we fall well behind with 18% preschool enrollment. We need to do better and serve more of our at-risk early learners. Research has shown that quality preschool programs offer long-term benefits, including better school performance, improved graduation rates and higher rates of employment and homeownership.

<i>Recommended Position:</i>	Introduce/Support Budget Amendments
<i>Supports Dreams4RPS:</i>	<p>Action 1.8 – Collaborate with the City of Richmond and the Commonwealth of Virginia to expand preschool to two years (adding three-year-olds), and to provide fee-based access for higher-income families to generate greater socio-economic diversity in our early childhood classrooms.</p> <p>Action 5.4 – Implement an equity-based funding formula that ensures that schools that need the most actually receive the most.</p>
<i>Possible Fiscal Impact:</i>	<p>State Cost: Indeterminate</p> <p>RPS Impact: Currently receives 4.9% of statewide appropriation (FY20 \$3.7 million)</p>

3 Year Old Expansion - Dreams4RPS specifically includes Action 1.8 to request funding to establish a VPI pilot program to provide VPI to 3-year-olds in RPS and language to allow for fee-based access for higher-income families to generate greater socio-economic diversity in our early childhood classrooms. RPS could propose that fees received may offset the local match and also may request permission to use private/philanthropic funds to cover local match.

Increase Per Pupil Allocations - For FY20, the General Assembly adopted a \$2.3 million increase to the per pupil amount from \$6,125 to \$6,326 for full-day programs and from \$3,062 to \$3,163 for half-day programs. RPS and other advocates should request introduction of budget amendments to secure an increased per pupil amount to \$6,500 for full day and \$3,250 for half day in FY 2020.

Protect RPS VPI Slots – In the Governor’s proposed budget amendments, there is language that would cause RPS to lose unused slots from FY19. RPS should advocate for amendments that will protect those slots and help identify barriers to full utilization.

8. Alternative School Funding

The state should fund alternatives to suspension and expulsion to help disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline. Funds could support the development of innovative alternative schools for students facing long-term suspensions or expulsions. Funds could also be used to train school staff on restorative justice practices.

<i>Recommended Position:</i>	Monitor/Support Legislation and Budget Amendments
<i>Supports Dreams4RPS:</i>	<p>Action 1.7 – Develop and implement a plan to reimagine “alternative education programs” (serving students who are over-age and/or under-credited) by re-engaging young people through “out-of-the-box” learning and leadership experiences (e.g., “outward bound”-type programs, trade-based apprenticeships, etc.).</p> <p>Action 3.8 – Collaborate with the City of Richmond and the Commonwealth of Virginia to launch a School Justice Collaborative to change policies that are contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline.</p>
<i>Possible Fiscal Impact:</i>	Indeterminate

9. School Safety and Security

The Virginia Children’s Cabinet School Safety Workgroup and House Select Committee on School Safety approved a combined 27 policy recommendations.

Recommended Position: Monitor/Support Appropriate Legislation and Budget Amendments

Supports Dreams4RPS:

Action 3.3 – Increase the number of staff providing mental health and social supports by at least 25% and ensure that all schools have a nurse.

Action 5.4 – Implement an equity-based funding formula that ensures that schools that need the most actually receive the most.

Possible Fiscal Impact: Indeterminate

RPS should prioritize the following:

Increase Funding and Staffing Levels of School Counselors and Support Staff – Increased funding should be requested to increase the number of social workers, school counselors, and school nurses to ensure that every school has adequate support. (Of note: most RPS social workers currently cover two schools and many of our schools do not have a full-time school nurse.) In addition, policy changes should be requested to ensure that the administrative duties for these positions (time away from actually serving students) are kept to a minimum.

The Governor’s amended budget provides \$36 million for school counselors in fiscal year 2020 in order to reduce counselor-to-student ratios. Current ratios: 500-to-1 in elementary schools, 400-to-1 in middle schools, and 350-to-1 in high schools. Proposed ratios: 375-to-1 in elementary schools, 325-to-1 in middle schools, and 300-to-1 in high schools. This amendment is the first part of a three-year phase-in to reduce the staffing ratio for school counselors to 250-to-1 in all schools by fiscal year 2022.

Provide Funding to Support Trauma Informed Care – Request funding to expand trauma-informed training for school staff.

Increase Funding for School Resource Officers (SROs) and School Security Officers (SSOs) – Currently only two RPS elementary schools have SROs. Funding should be provided through the School Resource Officer Grant Program to enable every school to have one.

School Security Equipment – Many RPS facilities lack or have outdated/broken security equipment. Funding should be provided to help RPS cover these basic security costs. Of note: the Governor’s amended budget increases the cap for school security equipment grants from \$100,000 to \$250,000.



10. Support an Increase in the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)

This payment from the Commonwealth serves to offset the impact of having non-taxable property in a locality. Increasing this payment would dramatically enhance Richmond’s revenues given the high percentage on non-taxable property within its city limits.

<i>Recommended Position:</i>	Monitor/Support Budget Amendments
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<i>Supports Dreams4RPS:</i>	Action 5.4 – Implement an equity-based funding formula that ensures that schools that need the most actually receive the most.
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<i>Possible Fiscal Impact:</i>	Indeterminate
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RPS will support the City’s legislative efforts in this area.