



# RPS 2020 Legislative Policy Positions

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## **FUNDING AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **Alternative Education**

Support the development of funding streams and initiatives to better enable RPS to provide alternatives to the normal school environment for students who have not been successful in traditional school environments. Currently, only regional alternative education programs are state funded and divisions should receive similar support in offering their own programs.

### **Career and Technical Education**

Support funding for locally driven career and technical education and related graduation requirements.

### **Energy Efficient Infrastructure**

Support grant programs, state incentives, and initiatives for energy efficient and sustainable infrastructure, including solar energy systems and electric buses.

### **Instructional Hours**

Support additional state funding to provide resources for staff compensation should RPS decide to extend instructional hours. Such support should be limited to school divisions operating under MOU and state supervision by the Virginia Department of Education.

### **Private School Tax-Credit Scholarship Program**

Oppose policies and programs, like the Education Improvement Tax Credit Scholarship program, that negatively affect student enrollment in RPS.

### **Study of Funding the True Cost of Education**

Support a comprehensive study of the Commonwealth's education funding formulae – the Standards of Quality (SOQ) and Local Composite Index (LCI) – which are more sensitive to the state's revenue situation than the educational needs of Virginia's students.

### **Local Composite Index Reform**

Support modifications to the Local Composite Index of Ability to Pay (LCI) to ensure a more equitable and fair formula for districts with high inventories of tax-exempt properties such as Richmond. Immediate modifications to the LCI formula that RPS supports includes the addition of variables such as an equity factor, a Capitol City Multiplier, or a reduction in the weight of property values.

### **Lottery Funds**

Support preserving all lottery funds specifically for local school system funding. RPS opposes supplanting state general fund obligations with funding from non-general fund and lottery revenues. Support granting local school systems greater autonomy in determining the best uses of lottery funds.



### **Transportation**

Support efforts to determine the full costs student transportation, both K-12 and preschool, and seek additional state support for this critical service to ensure that the district has the resources to provide efficient transportation to all students.

### **Teacher Recruitment and Retention**

Support efforts and funding to enable local school divisions and the state to implement strategies to address teacher shortages. RPS also supports free speech protections, revisions to the evaluation process, class-size reduction, and measures that would provide teachers with additional professional flexibility in their workday.

### **Teacher Residency Program**

Support maintaining or increasing funding for the Teacher Residency Program (TRP). TRP was created to meet the challenges distinct to urban school systems by training teachers for the unique demands of the urban classroom. Virginia Commonwealth University and Old Dominion University currently have successful partnerships with their respective local public school systems, saving public dollars through decreased teacher turnover and more effective teachers.

### **Targeted Compensation**

Support additional pay incentives and state support for teachers who teach in hard-to-staff schools.

## **SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE / LOCAL AUTHORITY**

### **Retention of Unexpended Funds**

Support legislation that allows unexpended funds at the end of each fiscal year to be retained by school divisions, instead of being remitted to local appropriating bodies.

### **Proceeds from Sale of School Board Property**

Support legislation that permits local school boards to sell surplus real property and retain the proceeds from such sales, with proceeds accruing to capital improvement funds. RPS does not believe that such funds should automatically transfer to local appropriating bodies.

### **Local Authority for Charter Schools**

Oppose policies that remove or restrict local school board authority over the establishment or operation of charter schools within their division.

### **Non-Public School Student Participation in Interscholastic Programs**

Oppose allowing non-public school students to participate in interscholastic sports and other extracurricular programs.

### **Support and Process Improvements for State Supervised School Divisions**

Explore and support statutory, regulatory, or procedure changes that would provide additional state support and improve the VDOE/school division collaboration process for divisions under a Memorandum of Understanding and corrective action process with the state.



### **Open Government and FOIA**

Support policies to enhance transparency in government. This includes revisions to existing FOIA laws to improve information access and engagement of family and community members in the governance of our schools, as well as policies to ensure public input and visibility in using of private funding streams for public programs.

## **STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITY**

### **Student Discipline**

Support policies that help local school systems address student conduct violations in ways that avoid negative interaction with law enforcement in schools and unnecessary student entry into the criminal justice system. RPS supports policies that require or encourage the juvenile and criminal justice systems to recognize the various societal factors that often lead students to commit infractions, and policies that implement lenient or alternative sentencing, as appropriate.

### **Trauma-Informed Care**

Support strategies and funding to help local school systems implement trauma-informed programs by enhancing professional development, early identification, and universal adoption of teaching methods (such as multisensory reading programs) that can be used to support all students.

### **Standards of Learning**

Support SOL reform and policies that (1) establish an assessment and accountability system focused on measures of both student achievement and student growth over time, (2) reduce the number of SOL tests, and (3) allow for local flexibility on SOL testing timeframes.

### **Student health and wellness**

Support policies that promote, and provide funding to ensure, the healthy physical and mental development of students, especially in meeting healthy nutrition standards.

### **Parent Teacher Home Visits**

Support creation of a pilot grant program or teacher incentive program to support expansion of parent teacher home visits.

### **Inclusive and Safe Communities**

Support efforts to enact anti-discrimination laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and other laws that support inclusive and safe communities.

### **Other**

In the absence of an adopted position on other topics, Richmond Public Schools supports the policy positions of the Virginia School Boards Association and the Virginia Association of School Superintendents. Should there be conflicting positions, the Richmond City School Board will be asked to affirm a new policy position on such topic.