



# Hanover County Public Schools Legislative Agenda 2023

## SECTION 1: STATE EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

### The Hanover County School Board:

- Urges the Virginia General Assembly to continue its efforts towards the full elimination of the Support Position Cap to provide greater assistance to the ever-increasing and complex needs of our students, such as mental health.
- Urges the Virginia General Assembly to fully fund the cost of implementing the Standards of Quality (SOQ), at a minimum, and as defined by job function rather than position title. The costs should reflect the actual operating expenditures of local school divisions, including instructional and support costs.
- Requests that the Virginia General Assembly continue its efforts towards developing a more comprehensive funding plan to assist school divisions with replacing aging infrastructure.
- Urges the Virginia General Assembly to maintain the current 2022-2024 rebenchmarking formula during the biennium.
- Urges the Virginia General Assembly to increase funding in support of competitive salaries to enhance the recruitment and retention of the best instructional and support staff.
- Urges the Virginia General Assembly to expand upon its efforts to address the current teacher shortage crisis in the Commonwealth, and continue to expand the development of alternative pathways to teacher licensure and the support of enhanced recruitment and retention of teachers.
- Requests the Virginia General Assembly to provide greater flexibility in the use of retired school employees for critical shortage area positions, such as eliminating the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) requirement for a bona fide break in service for 12 consecutive months.
- Encourages the Virginia General Assembly to eliminate the VRS requirement that employees who are classified as non-professional support employees participate in the Virginia Retirement System, thus improving recruitment and retention efforts, specifically among bus drivers, custodians, and food service workers.

- Urges the Virginia General Assembly to provide increased support for student mental health services.
- Encourages the Virginia General Assembly to provide additional funding for the implementation of proven methods of preventing and addressing student misbehaviors that lead to suspension and expulsion (i.e., Virginia Tiered Systems of Support, Restorative Justice, Regional Programs, Online Services, community-based services, etc.).
- Requests the Virginia General Assembly to provide additional funding for local and regional alternative education programs for elementary and secondary students.
- Encourages the Virginia General Assembly to continuously improve and examine the state's current system of accountability to reflect the importance of a holistic education.
- Requests that the Virginia General Assembly continue to appropriate adequate monies to fund its pro rata share of the required contributions for VRS benefits for state funded teacher salaries and that the State make its contributions directly to VRS so that the State liability will be accurately reported under applicable accounting standards.
- Supports additional legislative and regulatory requirements for public K-12 education only if they are reasonably cost effective, will result in demonstrable improvements to education to educational outcomes or student health and safety and are fully funded by the state on an ongoing basis.

## **SECTION II: NATIONAL EDUCATION ISSUES**

### **The Hanover County School Board:**

- Urges the federal government to fully fund the additional costs and requirements accruing to local school divisions for the implementation of federal accountability.
- Urges the federal government to fully fund IDEIA 2004. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 1975 indicated that the federal government would fund 40 percent of the cost of educating children with disabilities.
  - The Fiscal Year 2022 federal appropriation for IDEIA only covered 14% of additional costs required for special education. This represents a shortfall of \$24.7 billion, which states and school districts had to fund.
  - This continuous and compounding shortfall creates a burden on local communities and denies full opportunity to all students—with and without disabilities.
  - Special education costs vary considerably on a case by case basis. In Hanover's most recent excess cost report, the average annual cost to educate a non-special education student was \$10,305; the average cost to educate a special education student in the same year was \$17,086 — an additional amount of \$6,781 per pupil to meet special education needs.
- To support school readiness efforts by fully funding Title I and Head Start.