

**Henrico County Public Schools  
Legislative Program  
2012 General Assembly**

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## **LEGISLATIVE GOALS**

### **ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

**We support efforts to maintain strong K-12 academic standards while providing a variety of means for achievement of those standards.**

### **FUNDING**

**We support full funding for all current state and federal mandated programs (SOL's, SOQ's and NCLB) and for rebenchmarking based on prevailing educational practices occurring in our school divisions to achieve these standards.**

### **HIGHLY QUALIFIED STAFF**

**We support funding instructional positions at an acceptable level in order to remain competitive nationwide and to attract the most highly qualified teachers.**

### **LOCAL AUTONOMY**

**We support the preservation of local prerogatives over education matters that are best governed at the local level as set forth in Article VIII, section 7 of our State Constitution.**

### **NEW GUIDELINES, PROGRAMS**

**We oppose the addition of any new federal or state mandated guidelines or programs without adequate funding.**

### **PUPIL/TEACHER RATIO**

**We support continued legislative efforts to recognize the impact of low pupil-teacher ratios on student achievement, particularly in grades K-3.**

### **SAFE SCHOOLS**

**We support the preservation of current legislation that provides a safe school environment for all students through local interpretation of strong disciplinary measures and high expectations of student conduct.**

### **TECHNOLOGY**

**We support current legislation for funding technology implementation in all K-12 classrooms, while providing fair and equitable online access to information for all students.**

### **21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY SKILLS**

**We support federal and state efforts to align Virginia's curriculum standards with 21<sup>st</sup> century international performance standards and assessments to create a competitive workforce.**

## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

### FUNDING

- **HCPS opposes any new unfunded mandates.**
- **HCPS supports giving maximum flexibility to localities to allow them to use funding where there is the greatest need**
- **HCPS opposes any mandate that would require 65% or any other % spending formula.**
- **HCPS opposes changes to the composite index.**
- **HCPS supports the reinstatement of allocating lottery funding for school construction.**
- **HCPS supports full funding of the biennial re-benchmark of the SOQ funding formulas.**

### VRS

- **HCPS supports restoring funds taken from VRS to balance the state budget.**
- **HCPS opposes immediate changes in the VRS employer or membership contribution rates. If the state mandates member contributions, HCPS supports only mandating new member contributions, not current employee contributions.**

### SCHOOL BOARD AUTHORITY

- **HCPS supports giving local school boards the authority to establish their school calendar as long as SOQ and SOA requirements are met.**
- **HCPS opposes legislation that would impose universally-applicable restrictions on local school board authority to take disciplinary action against students for specific actions or behaviors.**

### CHILDHOOD OBESITY

- **HCPS opposes any state mandate that would require a fixed amount of time per week of physical education for elementary and middle school students that exceeds the current requirements in the SOQ's.**

### HOMESCHOOL STUDENTS PLAYING SPORTS

- **HCPS opposes legislation that would require local school boards to allow home school students to try out for interscholastic activities, including but not limited to sports.**

## 1. CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION

**HCPS supports a continued focus on career & technical education as a significant program choice for all students, but opposes state legislation that would dictate additional program elements and/or implementation that would impact local resources such as facilities, staffing, or instructional support.**

Henrico's Department of Career & Technical Education offers comprehensive programs and services in twelve middle schools, nine high schools, two technical centers, two adult education centers, and the Academy at Virginia Randolph. School guidance counselors play a key role in advising middle and high school students of the various CTE opportunities that are available to them.

HCPS has a strong interest in supporting CTE as a program choice for all students. Henrico is home to many business and industrial partners who also have a continuing interest in a strong CTE program. HCPS strongly supports continuing efforts to collaborate and partner with businesses in remaining current with industry and technical practices.

Two unfunded mandates have been implemented recently. In 2009, as part of the revisions to the Standards of Accreditation (SOA), a new statewide graduation requirement in economics and personal finance was adopted for the Standard, Standard Technical, Advanced Studies, and Advanced Technical Diplomas. This requirement became effective with students entering the ninth grade in 2011, including the continued use of a course in personal finance to satisfy a graduation requirement in mathematics for the Modified Standard Diploma.

The second unfunded mandate reflects the middle school academic and career planning guidelines as part of the Standards of Accreditation that were adopted by the State Board on September 17, 2009, requiring that a personal Academic and Career Plan be developed for each seventh-grade student beginning with the 2011-12 school year. These plans must be signed by the parent. Although the ACP's were delayed until 2012-2013, HCPS has moved forward with continuing to complete ACP's for all students in grades 7-11.

The Standards of Quality mandate a middle school staffing ratio of one counselor for every 400 students. HCPS currently maintains a slightly higher staffing ratio in its middle schools, but would still need to add counselors in order to effectively implement this initiative.

The ratio for middle school is 1:400 though the American School Counselor Association has advocated for a 1:250 ratio. A 1:250 ratio would greatly increase the quality of the ACP's for middle and high school students and would provide a much more meaningful experience for students and their families in developing secondary and post-secondary college and career plans.

HCPS opposes the personnel requirements of highly qualified teachers for Career & Technical education courses. Members of the community in banking or engineering could offer exceptional expertise in the classroom, but are ineligible to teach without getting a professional teaching license. This is a federal mandate through No Child Left Behind, but is a lost opportunity for Henrico students.

HCPS also opposes any one measurement being used to determine whether a student is college or career ready.

## 2. FUNDING

**HCPS supports state funding of public education through the Standards of Quality (SOQ) and other programs. Critical gaps still remain between SOQ funding and the actual costs of services. These gaps have grown with the significant decreases in state revenues and the current budget shortfalls. HCPS continues to support efforts by the State Board of Education to review the SOQ's to better reflect the prevailing educational practices of local school divisions for maximum success.**

**2.A. Henrico County Public Schools acknowledges that state revenues have continued to decline, which means fewer dollars for public school funding, but opposes changes in the current funding formula without a JLARC study to be done to thoroughly analyze the impact on localities and public school funding of mandated federal and state programs.**

**2.B. Rebenchmarking is the routine (biennial) assessment of the cost of funding the SOQ's based on revised enrollment figures and current operational costs. HCPS supports the current methodology using the prevailing practices of school divisions as the foundation and not calculated solely on state allocations to localities. This more accurately reflects what is needed in order to provide the academic programs for continued student achievement.**

Note: SOQ accounts include: Basic Aid; English as a Second Language; Gifted Education; Prevention, Intervention and Remediation; Special Education; Textbooks; Vocational Education; Fringe Benefits (Instructional positions); Sales Tax.

**2.C. Recognizing that funding decreases most likely will continue to be made, HCPS supports maximum flexibility be given to local school divisions to reduce their budgets.**

Incentive, categorical, school facilities, and supplemental education funding comprise the balance of state spending for Direct Aid and have proven to be effective in enhancing the social, physical, and emotional development of students, as well as fostering improved academic achievement.

**Categorical funding** provides for additional education programs that go beyond the Standards of Quality. These programs focus on particular needs of special populations or fulfill particular state obligations. State or federal statutes and regulations mandate much of this funding. (Adult Education & Literacy, Foster Care, School Lunch, Special Education – Homebound, Jails, State Programs, Vocational Education)

**Incentive-based programs** also go beyond the levels required to meet the Standards of Quality. The programs are voluntary but, in order to receive state funds, school divisions must certify that they will offer the program and provide a local match of funds for the program. (Alternative Education, At-Risk, Virginia Preschool Initiative, Compensation Supplement, Early Reading Intervention, Enrollment Loss, Governor's School, ISAEP, Clinical Faculty/Mentor Teacher Program, K-3 Class Size Reduction, School Breakfast, SOL Algebra Readiness, Special Education – In-service, Regional Tuition, Vocational Education, Education For A Lifetime, Project Graduation, Supplemental Basic Aid)

**2.D. HCPS opposes any mandate that would require a percentage formula for classroom funding vs. administrative and support costs; i.e. 65% funding plans.**

**2.E. HCPS supports the continued commitment to adequately fund ESL support positions and the administration of assessments tests that are not currently funded by the state.**

**2.F. HCPS supports the development and funding of adequate and equitable state and federal programs to assist localities with public school construction, renovation, and major maintenance projects.**

Virginia's local school districts are facing a growing challenge of meeting the needs of classroom construction and improvements. Estimated at \$6.2 billion in 1998, K-12 education infrastructure needs have been rising steadily due to increasing construction costs and the rise in Virginia's student-age population. State-supported resources for funding primary and secondary education infrastructure are shrinking in terms of both real and inflated dollars while the demand and expense for new schools and renovation of existing facilities becomes increasingly more critical. Traditionally, state funding for school construction has come from the Lottery and the School Construction Grants Program. Henrico supports the reinstatement of allocating lottery funding for school construction instead of its exclusive use for Basic Aid.

Based on forecasting growth in many localities and the continued aging of existing educational infrastructure, there is a real and growing concern that the delays in project funding will continue to increase, impairing Virginia's ability to fulfill its Constitutional obligation to ensure "an effective system of education throughout the Commonwealth."

We must continue to provide our students and education staff quality facilities that support the latest technologies, the most up-to-date instructional best practices, and the flexibility needed to accommodate varied program designs that meet the needs of all our students. Henrico's 2000 and 2005 bond referendums were very successful. However, new revenue streams are needed as we move to the 2013 biennium to continue renovations to aging schools as well as new construction for high growth areas.

### **3. GOVERNANCE & SCHOOL CHOICE**

**HCPS supports the ability of local school divisions to make decisions that will be in the best interests of their students.**

**3.A. With ongoing concerns about adequate state and federal funding, HCPS supports a resolution to study the complex issues surrounding fiscal autonomy for local school divisions that have elected School Boards.**

Since 1992 when enabling legislation was enacted, more than three fourths of the Virginia's localities have chosen to have elected school boards. These local school boards must rely on other governmental bodies for their resources. Henrico has a strong history of support for public education from its local Board of Supervisors. This study would only serve to gather data necessary to evaluate the pros and cons of this current structure.

**3.B. HCPS opposes any legislation beyond what currently exists that would facilitate the implementation of charter schools.**

Article VIII, Section 7 of the Virginia Constitution states that, "the supervision of schools in each school division shall be vested in a school board. . ." HCPS opposes any legislative changes that might diminish the authority and responsibility of the local school board. Public hearings held in 2003 throughout the state indicated little interest in or support for charter schools. Such schools should not be mandated, but should continue as a local option for local school boards. Through our robust program of choices for our varied student population, we feel that our students' needs are being served.

There are four public charter schools currently operating in Virginia (Murray High School in Albemarle, 2001; York River Academy, York, 2002; Albemarle Community Public Charter School, Albemarle, 2008; Patrick Henry School of Science and Arts, Richmond City, 2010). Virginia's standards for the application, implementation, operation, and evaluation of charter schools are extremely rigorous with the intent of ensuring a quality standards based education for all students who enroll. Local school boards have the autonomy to approve charter school applications with special attention given to meeting the required criteria.

In 2009 the General Assembly passed three bills creating new models for charter schools: the college lab school, the virtual school, and the provision that Virginia's Department of Education would provide technical assistance to a charter school in submitting their application to a school board and if denied, they must be given a written document stating why. HCPS will continue to monitor the implementation of these three pieces of legislation to ensure that all requirements of public schools are also reflected in charter schools.

Charter schools are nonsectarian, public schools of choice. They are granted special autonomy to run independently of their traditional local school system in exchange for meeting agreed-upon levels of student academic performance that must be approved by the local School Board. They can offer a specialized and innovative educational vision, or simply represent a new choice for parents.

**3.C. HCPS opposes allowing charter schools greater flexibility in meeting state requirements than what is currently required of public schools.**

### **3.D. HCPS opposes the use of tuition tax credits, tax deductions, or vouchers as a means of reimbursing parents for their children's K-12 educational expenses.**

HCPS believes that legislation supporting state funding in any manner for non-public school students would be detrimental to public schools in Virginia due to the financial implications of diluting state and local school budgets. We support a philosophy of choice for all students. With the variety of programs offered in Henrico, we feel we are currently able to meet the educational, social, and emotional needs of all students.

In the 2007, 2008, and 2010 General Assembly sessions, significant efforts were made to approve tuition assistance for dissatisfied parents of special education students. HCPS does not support legislation endorsing tuition payments, tax credits, and/or vouchers. Public schools are required to serve all students. Non-public schools can be selective with their students resulting in these two school models operating with unequal standards of accountability.

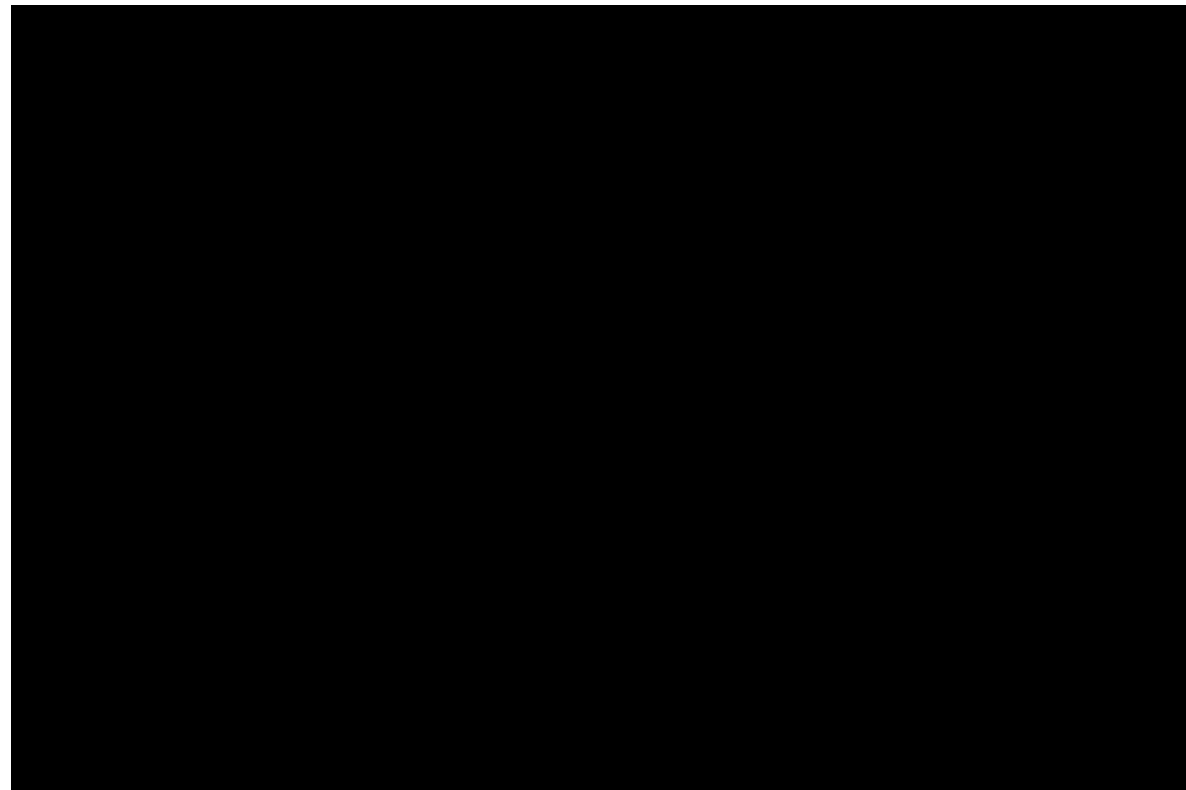
Students leaving the public school system in this manner would not absolve HCPS from federal IDEA accountability and NCLB calculations for AYP. Additional concerns have been discussed concerning the quality of the private school education program for special needs students. Henrico will continue to monitor proposed legislation containing these types of proposals.

The needs of public school funding have increased significantly with greater federal and state mandates. Taking public funds and giving them to private individuals, private business, or private schools would diminish the state's ability to fully support public education that is charged with providing an appropriate education for every child.

### **3.E. HCPS supports local flexibility and control over the public school calendar and the repeal of Section 22.1-79.1 of the Virginia Code.**

We believe that this law should be examined by the state's Attorney General for possible conflict with the Virginia constitution stating that local schools are responsible for public education.

There are other concerns. More than 50% of Virginia's local school divisions already have "good cause" waivers for weather-related closings, dependent programs, and innovative instructional programs such as year-round schools. (*See map below*) This clearly gives a greater advantage to these school divisions regarding the instructional time prior to the national and state standardized testing dates for AP exams, SAT's, as well as SOL's. Nationally, those students whose school divisions begin in August are also at an advantage with national standardized tests.



In 2006, the Florida Legislature passed a law requiring schools in that state to begin classes no earlier than 14 days before Labor Day. North Carolina, South Carolina, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Virginia and Texas all enforce school start date laws. Many other states are considering them, including, Georgia, South Dakota, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Changing the school calendar used to be an uncommon practice, but today modified and extended calendars are rapidly becoming the norm in schools across the country. In the cacophony of ideas for school reform, calendar innovation is a variable school boards and district executives can uniquely tailor to meet local needs as they seek ways to raise student achievement.

ERIC Digest 156 - March 2002, *School Calendars* by Bill Metzker; for the full report, go to <http://eric.uoregon.edu/publications/digests/digest156.html>

Excerpts from the DecideSmart research study done for the Virginia Department of Tourism arguing the economic impact of retaining the Labor Day law:

Tourism boards also advocate for a post-Labor Day start, because starting school on August 8 (as was the case in Memphis, Tennessee this year), means families have less time to take vacations. Hotels, resorts, county fairs, and even the local roller rink take a financial hit from August start dates. Thanks to tourism boosters, states like Virginia, Michigan, and Minnesota have enacted laws saying that school can't begin until after Labor Day. Michigan's tourism economy has seen a 25 percent boost since the law was passed in 2009.

<http://eric.uoregon.edu/publications/digests/digest156.html>

#### 4. IMMIGRATION

**HCPS supports a free public education for all K-12 students. In addition, HCPS opposes any new legislation that would place the burden of responsibility for enforcement of immigration laws on school personnel in determining the eligibility of students to receive a free public education.**

Previously school divisions throughout the state have been drawn into the discussions about denying illegal immigrants additional public services beyond the scope of education, i.e. health, social services, public safety services, etc. Henrico will continue to monitor these discussions. However, HCPS will continue to provide a free public education for all students who currently meet the residency requirements as outlined by Virginia law or meet the definition of homeless contained in federal legislation such as the McKinney-Vento Act, which was reauthorized in 2002. HCPS will continue to comply with the law which holds that immigration status has no place in the education of children.

## **5. INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL**

### **5.A. HCPS supports incentives to encourage qualified personnel to enter and remain in the teaching profession.**

HCPS is focused on identifying and hiring highly qualified teachers, particularly in the challenging areas of math, science, foreign languages, and special education.

Research has shown that the single most important factor in student achievement is a quality teacher who recognizes and implements the proven best practices for instruction in that particular content area. HCPS offers continuing staff development programs for teachers to retool and improve their instructional skills.

### **5.B. HCPS supports the increased funding for the Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program, with priority support for teachers who commit to teaching in critical shortage areas and Title I schools. The value of offering these scholarships to future teachers is without question.**

Students in this scholarship program are expected to pay these loans back to the state on a year-for-year basis of service rendered. This loan program acts as a significant incentive for college students who have an interest in teaching and an education career, and is intended to increase the number of students pursuing careers in teaching, particularly in the critical teacher shortage disciplines, including special education.

HCPS also has a keen interest in providing particular incentives for those high school students attending Glen Allen High School Specialty Center enrolled in the teacher preparatory program and who meet specific criteria based on financial need, academic performance, attendance, behavior, and a willingness to commit their first scholarship obligation years of teaching to Title I schools or at risk populations.

### **5.C. HCPS supports legislation designed to maintain teacher salaries at a level that is competitive with the job market in their geographic area.**

Henrico will continue to monitor state initiatives to maintain the state share for teacher salaries. Of particular interest with the 2012 session will be plans developed to address the VRS funding shortages and the possible requirement for employees to contribute their total share to VRS. This would be equivalent to a pay cut unless salaries would be raised to compensate for this change in the law.

Although much discussion has occurred regarding funding for teacher salaries, HCPS supports the research findings that have shown that the most important factor in a student's academic achievement is a highly qualified teacher.

### **5.D. HCPS supports incentive funding for comprehensive staff development programs, as well as various advanced education support programs for teachers and administrators.**

This incentive funding includes opportunities for teachers to pursue National Board Certification, as well as advanced degrees for instructional staff in their chosen content area. Currently HCPS

has 53% of its instructional staff with advanced degrees, which is one percentage point below the state's average.

**5.E. HCPS opposes legislation that reflects teacher evaluations and/or salaries tied to student performance without significant research data verifying that incentives for increased teacher pay directly affect student performance.**

HCPS will continue to monitor very carefully the reauthorization of the ESEA Act, which has several proposals related to Pay for Performance for teachers that cause great concern for local school divisions due to vast differences between content areas and student needs. Henrico is in a unique position to evaluate this concept with the new incentive pay pilot program at eight eastern Henrico schools awarded as a U. S. Department of Education Teacher Incentive Fund Grant on October 14, 2010.

## 6. LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

**Henrico County Public Schools continues to experience an increase in the number of LEP students. In 2003, according to the fall membership report submitted to the Department of Education, Henrico had 1455 LEP students. With the 2010-11 report, the total number of LEP students reported to the Department for the fall membership report stands at 2,512, and our numbers in the subgroup for AYP are now at 3175 students. Approximately 84 different languages are spoken in the school division, representing 90 different countries. These statistics show the need for instructional support so that these students will continue to be able to successfully complete their grade level academic achievement expectations. Henrico results met or exceeded state averages.**

| Academic Performance |          | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2009-10 | 2010-11 |
|----------------------|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| English              | Henrico  | 77      | 82      | 85      | 85      | 82      |
|                      | Virginia | 67      | 79      | 83      | 83      | 79      |
| Mathematics          | Henrico  | 75      | 78      | 80      | 83      | 83      |
|                      | Virginia | 70      | 75      | 79      | 82      | 82      |
| Writing              | Henrico  | 78      | 82      | 77      | 81      | 79      |
|                      | Virginia | 78      | 78      | 78      | 81      | 81      |
| History              | Henrico  | 80      | 82      | 84      | 86      | 78      |
|                      | Virginia | 74      | 77      | 80      | 80      | 73      |
| Science              | Henrico  | 83      | 81      | 80      | 83      | 83      |
|                      | Virginia | 73      | 74      | 76      | 78      | 78      |

### **6.A. HCPS supports adequate funding to ensure that appropriate instructional and assessment programs are tailored to meet the individual needs of students with limited English proficiency.**

Henrico will continue to support locally verified credits for LEP students, the testing of LEP students for AYP, and waiver requests made of USDE by the Virginia Board of Education regarding NCLB requirements of LEP students.

### **6.B. HCPS supports providing LEP students the appropriate academic and English language instruction in order for them to be successful in regular Standards of Learning testing.**

This testing should only occur when their English language proficiency level is adequate for them to demonstrate their mastery of subjects other than English which require significant reading skills. Virginia's SOL tests were developed for native English-speaking students and are extremely challenging for students learning the language. Studies consistently have shown that LEP students need an average of 5 years of instruction in English to acquire the academic language skills necessary to succeed on standardized content examinations.

### **6.C. HCPS supports alternate assessments for LEP students.**

Alternate assessments have been proven to be very effective. Currently Virginia has developed alternate mathematics tests and should develop alternate tests for each of the remaining core

subject areas and grade levels that are components of the state and federal accountability programs. This would be the fairest measure of an LEP student's progress in these content areas.

The Virginia Department of Education has phased out the portfolio-based Virginia Grade Level Assessment tests in favor of a more objective, state-scored multiple-choice test for students with disabilities. The Virginia Modified Achievement Standard Test, or VMAST, will be rolled out for math in the 2011-12 school year and for reading the following year. Although this new testing format is still considered an alternative form of testing LEP students, implementation results will continue to be assessed as to the test's effectiveness.

**6.D. HCPS opposes the current NCLB requirement that all LEP students are tested after one year. We do not feel that this is in the best interests of the students and the test results do not reflect the progress that many of these students have made in that time period. The State Board of Education has repeatedly requested a change to assessments given after two consecutive years. These requests have been denied by USDE.**

## 7. PRE-KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION

**HCPS supports the continued study of pre-kindergarten education for at-risk children, with a comprehensive analysis as to the impact of these programs on staffing, physical facilities, curriculum, and student achievement, and the possibilities provided through public/private partnerships.**

Expanding Henrico's existing Pre-K programs that are currently funded with Virginia Pre-School Initiative funds and Title I would require significant increases in financial support to meet the needs of all qualifying preschool students. Current funding proposals have included public/private partnerships. However, concerns about establishing any new program when state revenues are declining are valid.

With creative use of existing space, HCPS was able to expand its pre-K offerings this year by eight additional classrooms, thereby allowing 144 more students to participate in pre-K education. HCPS now has 684 total PreK students in 38 classrooms in 23 buildings. But with our increasing at-risk pre-school population, this is not a permanent solution. Currently there are 485 students on the waiting list. These students are not currently identified as Title I, VPI or Head Start as that does not occur until they are actually placed in a classroom.

## 8. REAUTHORIZATION OF ESEA (NCLB)

### **8.A. HCPS will continue to monitor closely the developments in the federal government around the reauthorization of ESEA/NCLB vs. the Common Core Standards released in September 2009 by the National Governor's Council of Chief State School Officers.**

Although Education Secretary Arne Duncan has repeatedly told representatives of school leaders, teachers, parents and interested community members that he is committed to the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (the law currently called No Child Left Behind), his actions and those of Congress would indicate otherwise. Executive Director Bruce Hunter of AASA stated in October 2011 that he believes a revised bill will soon be out of committee and on the Senate and House floor for discussion.

The House has already acted on three ESEA proposals, with two more topics awaiting House action. In September 2011, Senators Alexander, Burr, Isakson, Kirk, and Harkin have also introduced a series of bills to fix No Child Left Behind.

ESEA topics of agreement are:

- Measuring growth of students
- Disaggregation
- Annual summative assessment
- New higher standards
- New and better assessments
- SES (Supplemental Education Services) and choice, less prescriptive

ESEA topics where there are significant differences are:

- Accountability framework – AYP or growth
- Assessments – Quality, type
- Teacher evaluation – test weight, performance measures , performance levels
- Flexibility and transferability – how much, where
- Charter schools – rules the same or different than public schools
- Comparability relating to spending amount per pupil

## 9. SCHOOL HEALTH & SAFETY

**HCPS supports the provision of a healthy, safe and secure learning environment for all staff and students. Current policies and procedures are designed to secure physical facilities, educate students and staff about the appropriate use of the internet and other instructional technologies, consistent enforcement of student discipline through the HCPS Student Code of Conduct, and safety procedures regarding staff and student health.**

The safety and security of our students and staff members are the top priorities for Henrico County Public Schools. Our best preparations include a well-informed community and a coordinated agency response. Working very closely with local departments of police, fire and emergency services, HCPS will continue to provide support and assistance to administrators in developing school crisis plans and safety measures that are aligned with the State Board of Education guidelines. Connect-ED, an internet based school-to-parent communication service that enables school administrators to schedule, send, and track personalized messages to thousands of staff and parents in just minutes, continues to be used effectively. Crisis Preparedness Flyers are available to parents informing them about school procedures in the event of an emergency. Ongoing school safety audits are conducted in compliance with state guidelines.

Internet safety rules for students and staff can be found on the HCPS website and are reviewed annually with students as part of their computer security procedures.

The Student Code of Conduct is reviewed annually in schools by staff, and is sent home for parents to review and sign.

Administrators, teachers, and other staff members are continuously trained in the proper health safety procedures as recommended by OSHA and other Health Department guidelines.

Working closely with the Department of Health, H1N1 information has been shared with parents and members of the community, and student vaccinations against the flu have been conducted during the school day.

As a response to community concerns about the bullying of students both in and out of school, in the 2011 General Assembly session, House Joint Resolution 625 - Study of local school divisions' anti-bullying policies – was passed. This bill requests the Department of Education to:

- (i) Review and compare anti-bullying measures in the student codes of conduct from each school division,
- (ii) Compare existing policies with the Department's model policy for codes of student conduct,
- (iii) Determine if improvements to existing policies are warranted to combat bullying more effectively in Virginia's public schools.

This study is due to be presented in late fall of 2011. HCPS will be extremely interested in this report. However, HCPS opposes any legislation that would impose universally-applicable restrictions on local school board authority to take disciplinary action against students for specific actions or behaviors.

## 10. STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY & ACHIEVEMENT

**10.A. HCPS supports continuing efforts to move student achievement from competence to excellence.**

**10.B. HCPS supports state and federal funding of the student costs for Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate end-of-course examinations, as well as other incentives in order to encourage Henrico students to pursue and benefit from a rigorous program of advanced study and external examinations, as well as Career & Technical Education courses leading to technical or industry certifications. 80% of the technical or industrial jobs today require more advanced study than a high school diploma.**

The DOE continues to work towards all students moving from competence to excellence. Areas for improvement that Henrico has embraced are the increases in students taking the SAT and ACT tests, taking AP courses and exams, becoming CTE completers, achieving CTE industry certification and state licenses, and students in dual enrollment programs with local colleges and universities.

|                | <b>2009-10<br/>Henrico<br/>SAT<br/>Scores</b> | <b>2010-11<br/>Henrico<br/>SAT<br/>Scores</b> | <b>2009-10<br/>State<br/>SAT<br/>Scores</b> | <b>2010-11<br/>State<br/>SAT<br/>Scores</b> | <b>2009-10<br/>National<br/>SAT<br/>Scores</b> | <b>2010-11<br/>National<br/>SAT<br/>Scores</b> |   |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|--|--|---|
| <b>Reading</b> | 514   | 509   | 511   | 512   | 500  | 497  |   |
| <b>Math</b>    | 507   | 499   | 511   | 509   | 515  | 514  |   |
| <b>Writing</b> | 495   | 491   | 496   | 495   | 491  | 489  |   |
|                | <b>2009-10<br/>Henrico<br/>ACT<br/>Scores</b> | <b>2010-11<br/>Henrico<br/>ACT<br/>Scores</b> | <b>2009-10<br/>State<br/>ACT<br/>Scores</b> | <b>2010-11<br/>State<br/>ACT<br/>Scores</b> | <b>2009-10<br/>National<br/>ACT<br/>Scores</b> | <b>2010-11<br/>National<br/>ACT<br/>Scores</b> | <b>College<br/>Readiness<br/>Benchmarks</b> |
| <b>English</b> | 22.2  | 21.8  | 22  | 22.1  | 20.5   | 20.6   | 18  |
| <b>Math</b>    | 21.8  | 21.7  | 22.1  | 22.2  | 21   | 21.1   | 22  |
| <b>Reading</b> | 22.7  | 22.7  | 22.5  | 22.7  | 21.3   | 21.3   | 21  |
| <b>Science</b> | 21.9  | 21.7  | 21.9  | 21.8  | 20.9   | 20.9   | 24  |

The number of students enrolled in Dual Enrollment courses has significantly dropped due to the revised definition of “dual enrollment” courses. Henrico’s AP student enrollment increased from 2367 in 2009-10 to 2739 in 2010-11, and the number of students taking the AP tests increased slightly from 2271 in 2009-10 to 2280 in 2010-11.

In the 2010-11 school year, approximately 49% of Henrico graduates received an advanced studies diploma, and 42% (no change from 2009) received a standard diploma. CTE students have also excelled with 1780 CTE completers, 949 receiving industry certification, and 35 obtaining state licenses for various career choices.

In 2010, only one Henrico school did not achieve full accreditation.

**10.C. HCPS supports the continued study of the alignment of graduation rates and accreditation.**

The DOE has now standardized graduation rates for localities so that comparative data among schools and school divisions is valid. This data will better reflect all students who achieve graduation but through a non-traditional path (students taking longer than the standard 4 years). This standardization process was a critical first step in implementing the recent DOE requirements stating that schools with a graduating class would be required to meet prescribed thresholds on a graduation and completion rate index, as prescribed by the Board of Education, for accreditation ratings for 2011-12.

Using this newly standardized data collection methodology, the Virginia Department of Education reports that 85.5 percent of the 98,027 students who entered the ninth grade during the 2006-07 school year graduated within four years. That's an increase of 2.2 percentage points from the previous year. Henrico had an 86.15% graduation rate for 2010-11 with an 89.49% completion rate (A completer is a student who has earned a diploma, a certificate of completion, a GED, or a GED in an ISAEP program.)

## **11. STUDENT DISCIPLINE & ACTIVITIES**

**11.A. HCPS supports maintaining the current statutory authority of local school boards to adopt regulations permitting them to choose among alternative discipline procedures as specified in the Code of Virginia for handling cases of suspension, expulsion, and exclusion.**

These procedures are critical to maintaining safe educational environments and guiding students in developing appropriate behavior and personal accountability.

**11.B. HCPS opposes legislation that would impose universally-applicable restrictions on local school board authority to take disciplinary action against students for specific actions or behaviors.**

HCPS has strong community support for its local school board to discipline students according to the adopted Code of Student Conduct. Proposed legislation, however well intended, that seeks to provide state mandated consequences for student misconduct, is not in the best interests of our students and our educational environment.

**11.C. HCPS opposes legislation that would require local school boards to allow home school students to try out for interscholastic activities, including but not limited to sports.**

Courts have repeatedly rejected constitutional complaints of home school students who have been denied access to either academic or extracurricular activities. They have routinely held that schools are not acting unreasonably in requiring full-time attendance and that they have the right to set eligibility requirements for school activities.

High school sports are not just about the after-school time or the game; the sports program is the third curriculum and is imbedded into the fabric of the school day. Student athletes are perceived as leaders in school, often mentoring other students who are aspiring athletes but have not yet met the academic requirements to play a team sport.

College NCAA rules would not permit a part-time student to be on one of their college teams as a representative of that school. High schools should be no different.

The academic performance of home school students cannot be fairly compared to that of public school students. VHSL requires a high school athlete to take 5 courses and pass 5 courses. There is no way to ensure that a home school student has met the same academic criteria.

## 12. STUDENT WELLNESS & FITNESS

**12.A. HCPS supports the current legislation that recognizes the role schools play in the provision of school health and physical education curriculum and services, as well as the wellness guidelines that have been developed by the State Department of Education. HCPS has established this area as a priority, resulting in an increase in the time allotted for elementary physical education. Students in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades are now receiving physical education instruction two times a week instead of only one as required.**

DOE already has a Wellness Policy that is in compliance with the federal policy, and which local school divisions have used to develop their own wellness policies. There are School Health Advisory Boards in all school divisions. Henrico has participated in a pilot program with the introduction of heart monitors (476 are currently available) that emphasize to students and their parents the importance of getting students in the healthy target heart rate zone during physical activity. Henrico has also taken steps to remove sugared sodas and candy from school vending machines, and now only offers sugar-free choices.

Henrico views the local health department as the primary provider of school and student health services, but will continue to be a part of ongoing discussions regarding this issue and will participate heavily in any legislative discussions that may occur as bills are proposed.

**12.B. HCPS supports continued attention to childhood obesity in Virginia's public schools. Any such consideration, however, should include the study and dissemination of best practices for both nutrition and physical activity which may help address this problem.**

Healthier food services choices for students continue to be offered through the school lunch program, as well as the beverages and snacks available to students in vending machines. Henrico has been very aggressive in funding additional positions at the elementary level for physical education, as well as continuing efforts to focus on physical fitness among staff members as well as students and families.

**12.C. HCPS opposes any state mandate that would require a fixed amount of time per week of physical education for elementary and middle school students that exceeds the current requirements in the SOQ's.**

Instructional time is extremely valuable to all teachers whose students' academic accountability is dependent on their SOL test performance. Physical education is not a component of student accountability at this time.

**12.D. HCPS supports the existing legislation providing for school lunch and school breakfast programs.**

The costs of these programs have increased significantly due to inflation and to school division efforts to improve student menus that now include leaner meats, whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables. However, they have not received any funding increases since 1981. These increases would provide assistance to localities in implementing the best practices recommended by the Governor's Scorecard for Nutrition and Physical Fitness.

### 13. TECHNOLOGY

**13.A. HCPS supports maintaining the current funding structure for the essential elements of a system-wide technology program. The identification of a revenue source dedicated to funding educational technology is crucial to the continued implementation and growth in this area and the assurance that students are prepared for the necessary 21<sup>st</sup> century skills expected in the workplace.**

HCPS continues to be nationally recognized for its leadership in instructional technology applications. The laptop initiative has provided Henrico students strong experience and knowledge of digital content and communications. Much of this focus has been in direct instructional applications. Other benefits have been in student awareness of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and technical applications that are found in abundance in the workplace.

Educational technology remains an integral part of HCPS education programs and an important concept of Virginia's Standards of Learning. SOL testing is being done more and more on the computer instead of a paper and pencil environment.

Computer assisted instruction is more important to the learning process today because of the digital instructional and educational content available and the immediacy with which information is made available to students.

Teacher training is also critically important as instructional personnel re-tool for the integration of new and more effective ways of delivering content to their students. Online learning was previously the exception; advanced coursework at the university or college level is filled with online components that reflect the demand for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

Infrastructure and technology support personnel are also extremely important to maximize the educational benefits of digital content, multimedia production, and social networking tools.

## **14. TRANSPORTATION**

### **14.A. HCPS supports measures that foster safe transportation for pupils, as well as the efficient operation of school division transportation systems.**

Our Pupil Transportation Department transports more than 46,000 students daily on more than 600 buses traveling more than 50,000 miles a day to 45 elementary, 12 middle and 9 high schools throughout the county. Shuttle services are also provided to the Technical and Specialty Centers located at various high schools. Statistics show that riding a school bus is considerably safer than riding in a car.

### **14.B. HCPS opposes legislation requiring the transportation of non-public school students to and from school or for extra-curricular activities.**

Henrico County Public Schools maintains a high standard of behavior at school, on school buses, and during school activities with its current Code of Student Conduct. Non-public school students would not be required to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct, and consequences for inappropriate behavior would be difficult to enforce when parents and students have not agreed to abide by the Code of Conduct.

Providing sufficient numbers of bus drivers to meet the needs of private school students in addition to providing transportation for special education students, specialty center students, alternative program students, gifted zone students, and activity buses would place an additional financial and operational burden on the school division. In addition, school bus driver shortages create an ongoing recruitment challenge to provide trained personnel to transport public school students.

In the 2007 General Assembly, legislation was passed that allows local school boards the opportunity to charge a fee to transport private school students on their public school buses. With Henrico's current situation, personnel would not be sufficient to provide transportation services for non-public school students.

### **14.C. HCPS opposes legislation requiring the installation and use of seat belts for students on school buses.**

Findings of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's April 2002 Report to Congress stated that lap belts appear to have little, if any, benefit in reducing serious injuries and actually could increase the incidence of neck and abdominal injuries. While the use of combination lap/shoulder belts could provide some benefit, misuse could result in serious injuries. HCPS will continue to follow the recommendations of the NHTSA regarding seat belts on buses.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Accredited with warning** – A school receives this rating if pass rates are below the achievement levels required for full accreditation. Schools that are Accredited with Warning undergo academic reviews and are required to adopt and implement school improvement plans. Schools that are Accredited with Warning in English and/or mathematics also are required to adopt instructional programs proven by research to be effective in raising achievement in these subjects.

**AYP** - Adequate Yearly Progress represents the minimum level of improvement that schools and school divisions must achieve each year as determined by NCLB.

**CTE** – Career & Technical Education is a program of study for high school students leading to jobs requiring industrial or trade certifications, but can also refer to program offerings for elementary and middle school students.

**Common Core Standards** – Developed by the National Governor’s Association, the Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy. Currently Virginia is one of six states that has NOT adopted the national Common Core Standards.

**Conditionally Accredited** - New schools that are comprised of students from one or more existing schools will be awarded this status for one year pending an evaluation of the performance of students on SOL tests and other statewide assessments. This rating may also be awarded to a school that is being reconstituted. A school rated as “Conditionally Accredited” following reconstitution will revert to a status of “Accreditation Denied” if it fails to meet the requirements for full accreditation by the end of the agreed upon term, or if it fails to have its annual application for such rating renewed.

**Disaggregated data** - Test results sorted by groups of students. Groups include students who are economically disadvantaged, from racial and ethnic groups, have special education needs, or have limited English proficiency. Disaggregated data allow parents and educators to see more than just the average score for a student’s school - it also shows how each student group is performing.

**ESEA** - Elementary and Secondary Education Act is the primary federal law affecting K-12 education. Congress reauthorizes it every six years. The most recent authorization is also referred to as the NCLB Act, approved by Congress in 2001 and signed into law by President George W. Bush in January 2002.

**Fully Accredited** - The accreditation rating earned by a school when students achieve an adjusted pass rate of 75 percent in third-grade and fifth-grade English, 70 percent in mathematics and 50 percent in third-grade science and history/social science. Otherwise, the student results

must meet the adjusted pass rate of 70 percent in each of the four core academic areas - English, mathematics, history/social science.

**Graduation rate** - Graduation rates for high schools and school divisions reported on the Virginia School Report Card include all recipients of any type of certificate or diploma (as well as students who have dropped out of or transferred into a high school) in the denominator and only those students receiving a Standard Diploma or Advanced Studies Diploma (excluding students receiving a Special Diploma, Modified Standard Diploma, Certificate of Attendance or GED certificate) in the standard number of years in the numerator.

**IDEA** – Individualized Disability Education Act

**LEP** - Limited English Proficient refers to students for whom English is a second language and who are not reading or writing English at their grade level.

**NAEP** - NAEP provides a common yardstick for measuring the progress of students' education across the country. While each state has its own unique assessment, NAEP asks the same questions in every state – making state comparisons possible.

**NCLB** - No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was signed into law by President Bush in 2002. The goals of this sweeping federal legislation will be met when:

- All children achieve high academic standards and are proficient in reading and mathematics;
- All children of limited English proficiency become proficient in English;
- All children are taught by highly qualified teachers;
- All students attend schools that are safe, drug free, and conducive to learning; and
- All students graduate from high school.

**Rebenchmarking** – A funding process that readjusts the amount of money that is allocated for public education from the state's budget for localities, taking into account the increases in the cost of living and student enrollment. This process is redone every two years.

**SOA – Standards of Accreditation** - The Standards of Accreditation (SOA) are the Board of Education regulations that establish criteria for approving public schools in Virginia.

**SOL** - The Standards of Learning (SOL) are the minimum grade level and subject matter educational objectives that students are expected to meet in Virginia public schools. Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools describe the Commonwealth's expectations for student learning and achievement in grades K-12 in English, mathematics, science, history/social science, technology, the fine arts, foreign language, health and physical education and driver education.

**SOQ – Standards of Quality** - The Standards of Quality (SOQ) are the constitutionally mandated, minimum programmatic requirements for the Commonwealth's public school divisions and the driving force behind the basic aid funding for public schools.

**Title I** - Federal-funding program designed to help low-income children who are behind academically or at risk of falling behind. Title I funding is based on the number of low-income children in a school, generally those eligible for free lunch or reduced-fee lunch programs.

**USDE – United States Department of Education** - ED was created in 1980 by combining offices from several federal agencies. ED's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

# Just the Facts

(Data as of November 21, 2011)

## Students

|                      |        |
|----------------------|--------|
| Elementary .....     | 22,336 |
| Middle .....         | 11,220 |
| High .....           | 14,360 |
| Other .....          | 743    |
| Total Students ..... | 48,659 |

## Graduates

|                               |                |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| On time 2010 Graduates .....  | 3,891          |
| On time Graduation Rate ..... | 86.2%          |
| Continuing Education .....    | 83%            |
| Scholarships .....            | \$15.8 Million |

## Ethnic Distribution

|                            |       |
|----------------------------|-------|
| Asian .....                | 7.9%  |
| Black .....                | 36.9% |
| Hispanic .....             | 6.6%  |
| White .....                | 45.0% |
| Other .....                | 3.6%  |
| Economic Deprivation ..... | 35.0% |

## Schools & Facilities

|                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Elementary .....                  | 45 |
| Middle .....                      | 12 |
| High .....                        | 9  |
| Technical Centers .....           | 2  |
| Alternative Program Centers ..... | 3  |
| Total Schools & Facilities .....  | 71 |

## Pupil/Teacher Ratios

|                  |      |
|------------------|------|
| Elementary ..... | 20.3 |
| Middle .....     | 22.9 |
| High .....       | 21.3 |

## Finance

|                                |                 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| 2011-12 Operating Budget ..... | \$502.6 Million |
| Per Pupil Expenditure .....    | \$9,256         |