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2023 Legislative Issue

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| Issue ID: 23E01 Fighting the Effects of Poverty on Education |
| This Issue is for: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fairfax County Delegation to the General Assembly <input type="checkbox"/> Fairfax County Board of Supervisors |
| Date Approved by Federation: 27 October 2022 |
| Issue: Providing educational funding from the Commonwealth to help defray the higher costs associated with educating students who live at or near the poverty level, traditionally identified as those who receive Free and Reduced-Price Meals (FRM). |
| Background: Students who live at or near the poverty line are among those who are most at risk of educational failure. Low-income students often require additional instruction and remediation, and their lack of at-home resources and support place them at a well-documented disadvantage when they enter the classroom. Data show that these disadvantages grow into an achievement gap which has proven difficult to narrow, let alone close. Meeting these children’s needs requires schools to spend extra time, attention, and other resources above and beyond what is needed for children with a higher socioeconomic background. (ref 22E01, 21E01, 20E01, 19E02, 18E02, 17E02) |
| Existing Conditions/Impacts: Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) serve a diverse student population. According to figures from October 2021 approximately 31% of the total student population (approximately 55,000 students) qualified for FRM. This percentage has grown significantly since the 2009 recession, while overall state funding levels for K-12 education have declined in real terms. Title I federal funds (for children in poverty) make up little of the difference between children’s needs and the funding required to meet those needs. |
| Preferred Position: We support legislation to provide increased Commonwealth-generated educational funding that addresses the higher needs of students who live at or near the poverty level and therefore are eligible to receive FRM. Per-student funding can help provide these children with the resources they need to be successful, and would help similarly situated children throughout the Commonwealth. |
| Benefits: Targeting educational funding for students in poverty will help address the achievement gap that has long existed among students whose demographic characteristics vary significantly across the Commonwealth. In addition, by basing funding on a per-student basis, we will be able to direct these funds to at-risk children in all communities. |
| Potential Supporters (Community leaders, Public/Private Partnership Opportunities, Organizations): Educational organizations and county governments, particularly in areas with high poverty rates. |
| Lead Federation Committee: Education |
| Prepared by & Federation email: Nancy Trainer and Annmarie Swope, Co-chairs Education@fairfaxfederation.org |



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2023 Legislative Issue

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| Issue ID: 23E02 Supporting the Expansion of Governor’s Schools |
| This Issue is for: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fairfax County Delegation to the General Assembly <input type="checkbox"/> Fairfax County Board of Supervisors |
| Date Approved by Federation: 27 October 2022 |
| Issue: How to continue to provide our most academically able students with challenging programs beyond those offered in their home schools, while simultaneously promoting access to such programs for historically underserved students. |
| Background: Since the establishment of the Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSS&T) in 1985, the student population within Fairfax County Public Schools alone has grown by more than 40 percent. Yet TJHSS&T remains the only selective high school within the division designed to serve the Governor’s School mission—to meet the needs of “students whose learning levels are remarkably different from their age-level peers.” Such population growth has increased competition for admission to TJHSS&T, even while FCPS grapples with difficult questions of how to ensure equitable access to gifted education. |
| Existing Conditions/Impacts: We agree with the authors of a 2020 review of FCPS’ Advanced Academic Program that “a school division the size of FCPS can support multiple selective high schools, lessening the... focus on selection for [TJHSS&T].” Other large districts—such as Boston and New York City—have had success in establishing multiple selective high schools in order to support students who require differentiated instructional opportunities. |
| Preferred Position: The Commonwealth should establish one or more additional Governor’s Schools in Fairfax County which can help serve the growing number of students who benefit from these unique, challenging academic environments. While we are neutral about such schools’ academic focus, we note that the proximity of Washington, D.C. could make Fairfax County well-situated to establish a school concentrating on government and international studies or, more broadly, humanities and the arts. |
| Benefits: Governor’s Schools are a valuable asset to the communities in which they sit, providing a nurturing environment not only to gifted students themselves but an investment in tomorrow’s leaders. When these schools are successful, they help retain and attract business investment as well. Local businesses and industries are designed to play an important role in Governor’s Schools, providing mentors, equipment and supplies, facilities, and expert advice. |
| Potential Supporters (Community leaders, Public/Private Partnership Opportunities, Organizations): Regional and local Economic Development Authorities, gifted organizations, county governments |
| Lead Federation Committee: Education |
| Prepared by & Federation email: Nancy Trainer and Annmarie Swope, Co-chairs Education@fairfaxfederation.org |



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| Issue ID: 23E03 Expanding Full Year School as an Option |
| This Issue is for: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fairfax County Delegation to the General Assembly <input type="checkbox"/> Fairfax County Board of Supervisors |
| Date Approved by Federation: 27 October 2022 |
| Issue: Providing school divisions with additional funding to educate children on a full year calendar, either on a school-by-school, school level (elementary, middle, or high school), or division-wide basis. |
| Background: Following the 2011-2012 school year, when nine Virginia elementary schools operated on a year-round calendar (including schools in nearby Alexandria and Arlington County), the Department of Education issued a Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) study on year-round education. The study concluded that year-round schools accelerated the improvement of test scores for certain student groups, notably Black, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students as well as students of limited English proficiency. According to the JLARC study, year-round calendars increased annual school expenditures by approximately three percent, due largely to the costs of providing course offerings to students during intersessions. |
| Existing Conditions/Impacts: During the Coronavirus pandemic, significant damage has been done to our children’s development, notably through learning loss. In 2021, Governor Northam issued guidance to school divisions suggesting that year-round schooling could be a useful tool in providing additional learning opportunities to aid in remediation. In the 2022 Appropriation Act, the General Assembly authorized planning and start-up grants to assist school divisions in implementing extended year or year-round school programs. State funding mechanisms will necessarily increase in importance, as federal Coronavirus relief resources such as Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds are exhausted. |
| Preferred Position: We support grants and/or other funding formulas which support either individual schools, school levels (elementary, middle, or high school), or entire school divisions shifting to a full year calendar. |
| Benefits: Year-round school not only provides relief from the well-documented “summer slide,” but also provides more consistent year-round childcare, and may improve the public esteem of the teaching profession as teaching is no longer viewed as a “part time” job. Year-round schools may also help address the achievement gap, which would improve the chances that students from disadvantaged backgrounds can reach their full potential. |
| Potential Supporters (Community leaders, Public/Private Partnership Opportunities, Organizations): Teachers’ Associations, anti-poverty groups |
| Lead Federation Committee: Education |
| Prepared by & Federation email: Nancy Trainer and Annmarie Swope, Co-chairs Education@fairfaxfederation.org |



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| Issue ID: 23E04 Studying the Use of Technology in Schools |
| This Issue is for: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fairfax County Delegation to the General Assembly <input type="checkbox"/> Fairfax County Board of Supervisors |
| Date Approved by Federation: 27 October 2022 |
| Issue: Establishing benchmarks and best practices for the use of technology in schools, at various grades and instructional levels. |
| Background: Since FCPS has equipped all students with laptops, it is imperative to determine which standards govern their optimal use in the classroom, and to set clear programmatic goals. Even as one-to-one computing became necessary during the pandemic, it remains true that many parents (including a significant number employed by tech firms in Silicon Valley) seek out low-tech schools for their children, particularly for younger students. Scarce rigorous studies establish whether or how the use of technology in schools improves learning outcomes. Copious amounts of “screen time” have created new deficits and risks for children, particularly in the area of mental health. |
| Existing Conditions/Impacts: Virginia’s Digital Learning Integration Standards do not specify the components of technological literacy, even as they advise that technological skills are essential for all students. Families’ experiences with online learning during the pandemic may make them wary of the value of technology as an educational tool. Though pandemic-related funding helped defray the significant hardware costs of expanding one-to-one computing to all students, these costs must now be borne as part of the ordinary budgeting process. |
| Preferred Position: We urge the House of Delegates and Senate to commission a study that documents the educational community’s best thinking regarding both the benefits and risks of the use of computers in classrooms. This study should not only share best practices (either across the Commonwealth or nation-wide) but also should describe the elements of digital literacy expected of students at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. |
| Benefits: Obtaining a study written by subject area experts will help responsibly guide school divisions throughout the Commonwealth as we integrate computing into the 21 st century classroom. Without such guidance, it is more difficult to defend a relatively expensive tool and ensure public support for keeping hardware and software up to date. |
| Potential Supporters (Community leaders, Public/Private Partnership Opportunities, Organizations): Northern Virginia Technology Council, Virginia Association of School Superintendents |
| Lead Federation Committee: Education |
| Prepared by & Federation email: Nancy Trainer and Annmarie Swope, Co-chairs Education@fairfaxfederation.org |



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| Issue ID: 23P01 - Age Restrictions on the Purchase of Ammunition |
| This Issue is for: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fairfax County Delegation to the General Assembly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fairfax County Board of Supervisors |
| Date Approved by Federation: 27 October 2022 |
| Issue: Virginia law does not address age requirements for the purchase of ammunition. |
| Background: Prospective purchasers of firearms must present a valid photo-ID form issued by a governmental agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia that denotes the individual's name, sex, and date of birth (ref 21P01). Federal law requires an individual to be at least 21 years of age to purchase handgun ammunition and at least 18 years old to purchase rifle or shotgun ammunition. |
| Existing Conditions/Impacts: Virginia's approach to firearms records checks does not infringe on an individual's Constitutional Rights (via 2 nd Amendment), that is, an individual's ability to legally purchase or possess a firearm is guaranteed while individuals who are prohibited by State or Federal law are denied legal access to firearms. |
| Preferred Position: Virginia law should reflect that an individual be at least 21 years of age to purchase handgun ammunition and be at least 18 years old to purchase rifle or shotgun ammunition. |
| Benefits: Virginia would establish a law requiring an individual to be at least 21 years of age to purchase handgun ammunition, and be at least 18 years of age to purchase rifle or shotgun ammunition. |
| Potential Supporters (Community leaders, Public/Private Partnership Opportunities, Organizations): Gun Violence Prevention Caucus, Safe Virginia Initiative, Virginia State Police, Fairfax County Police Department, Fairfax County Public Schools, League of Women Voters, local religious organizations |
| Lead Federation Committee: Public Safety Committee, Legislation Committee |
| Prepared by: Patrick Smaldore, Chair, Public Safety Committee PublicSafety@fairfaxfederation.org , Legislation@fairfaxfederation.org |