

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 237

Continuing the Commission on Educational Infrastructure as the Commission on Educational Infrastructure and Technology.

Agreed to by the Senate, March 9, 2000
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 8, 2000

WHEREAS, educational technology enables new and more effective methods of learning, thereby helping students become better educated citizens; and

WHEREAS, obtaining sufficient computer skills in grades K through 12 is crucial in advancing to institutions of higher education and entering the workforce, thus providing benefits not only to the students but also to the Commonwealth's economy; and

WHEREAS, using up-to-date computer equipment and software is essential in obtaining sufficient computer skills and providing instruction utilizing educational technology; and

WHEREAS, a predictable funding source is crucial in planning and implementing educational technology, but the Commonwealth currently lacks such a predictable funding source for educational technology; and

WHEREAS, beginning in the 1980s and gaining momentum in the 1990s, school construction and technology issues have been paramount in the minds of many of Virginia's division superintendents, school boards, and local government officials; and

WHEREAS, originally established pursuant to House Joint Resolution No. 135 (1996), the Commission on Educational Infrastructure was continued and expanded, with co-chairmen established, in 1998 pursuant to House Joint Resolution No. 165; and

WHEREAS, over the last several years, the Commission has implemented study plans to collect data and background information on Virginia construction and educational technology programs and on the programs implemented in other states; and

WHEREAS, in the last two years, the Commission has received presentations from North Carolina, Ohio, and West Virginia, conducted a review of construction issues in other states in the Southern region, examined higher education methodology for determining space utilization, received data on the Commonwealth's student demographics and the effects of facility needs, and initiated its own survey of facilities' needs in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, during the 1999 interim, the Commission continued to receive data on the Literary Fund and from the Virginia Public School Authority; and

WHEREAS, the primary 1999 focus of the Commission was on the school of the new millennium, studying what the school of the twenty-first century will look like and how technology will impact building design and curricula, school operations, teaching, student achievement, and student discipline; and

WHEREAS, in accomplishing this goal, the Commission has received presentations on several innovative, high-tech public school programs, such as Henry County's Universal Laptop Initiative, a unique collaboration between the local governing body and the school board to place a laptop computer in the home of every fourth and eighth grade student and to expand this access to technology by one grade each year until all students in grades four through 12 have access to this program; and

WHEREAS, the Commission also received a presentation and a virtual tour of the Center for Applied Technology and Career Exploration (CATCE) in Franklin County, a problem-based learning approach that includes the Socratic method, project-based education, and discovery-based education in a high technology, corporate-setting environment; and

WHEREAS, these presentations and the data received on Virginia's educational technology efforts have convinced the Commission of the importance and integral role of educational technology in this new century; and

WHEREAS, the Commission also received the final report on the survey of facilities needs that was initiated in 1998, learning that 128 school divisions responded to the survey, providing data that indicates structural problems in significant numbers of schools, with one-third of the respondents noting the need for attention in the near future, 12 percent noting significant deficiencies, and three percent noting serious inadequacies; and

WHEREAS, of the 87 school divisions having capital improvement plans (approximately 68 percent), over three billion dollars of construction needs are projected for the five years from 1999 to 2003; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the almost \$900 million in nondebt expenditures, the total outstanding indebtedness for school construction/infrastructure was reported as almost four billion dollars on June 30, 1998; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has recommended the authorization of an escrow account for local governing bodies to deposit the lottery funds appropriated in 1999 for education infrastructure in order to empower those school divisions which were not able to spend the money in this fiscal year to carry the funds forward; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has also recommended the codification of the lottery distribution procedure that was included in the 1999 budget; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Commission on Educational Infrastructure be continued as the Commission on Educational Infrastructure and Technology. The Commission shall be composed of 34 members to be appointed as follows: the chairmen of the Senate Committee on Finance and the Senate Committee on Education and Health; 8 members of the Senate appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; the cochairmen of the House Committees on Appropriations and Finance; the cochairmen of the House Committee on Education; 6 members of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House, in accordance with the principles of Rule 16 of the Rules of the House of Delegates; 8 citizens, including one representative each of the Virginia Municipal League and the Virginia Association of Counties to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections, one each who shall have expertise in commercial communications technology, educational technology, school design and construction, and funding public school and capital construction, one licensed architect who specializes in school design, and one citizen at-large to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; and the Lieutenant Governor of Virginia, the Secretary of Education, the president of the Board of Education, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction who shall serve ex officio with full voting privileges.

The Commission on Educational Infrastructure and Technology shall include in its agenda the development of a formula for funding educational technology and technology support personnel.

The direct cost of this study shall not exceed \$25,450.

The Commission shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 2001 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint Rules Committee. The Committee may withhold expenditures or delay the period for the conduct of the study.