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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 34
AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Rules
on February 25, 2002)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Lingamfelter)

Directing the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) to examine best administrative, fiscal, and service practices in the Commonwealth's public school divisions.

WHEREAS, pursuant to Article VIII, § 1 of the Constitution of Virginia, the General Assembly must "provide for a system of free public elementary and secondary schools...and... ensure that an educational program of high quality is established and continually maintained"; and

WHEREAS, integral to the provision of a quality public education system is efficiency in the administration of programs, services, and budgetary matters; and

WHEREAS, with the adoption of Senate Joint Resolution 171, the 1989 Session of the General Assembly established a commission to study the efficiency of the use of public education funds, and directed this commission to "review the requirements of state and federal mandated educational programs to determine the feasibility of consolidating certain programs, services, and school division functions, assess whether and to what extent the instructional, supervisory and administrative staff levels exceed need, particularly given the number of students enrolled in the public schools of the division, review the organizations, planning, and budgetary structures of the school divisions to determine the need and ways in which such structures may be improved to maximize the utilization of personnel and funds, and recommend such statutory, regulatory and policy changes as may be necessary to facilitate the efficient use of public education funds"; and

WHEREAS, more than a decade has passed since the commission explored these efficiency concerns, and the Commonwealth's public schools face continuing challenges as enrollments grow and required programs and services increase; and

WHEREAS, while the Standards of Quality establish within the Department of Education a "best practices" unit to "identify and analyze effective instructional programs and practices and professional development initiatives," there is no similar mechanism for the identification of effective administrative and fiscal practices to assist school divisions in promoting efficiency and program effectiveness; and

WHEREAS, the identification of practices that would result in revenue savings to school divisions and to the Commonwealth and services that might be effectively out-sourced will assist school divisions in providing the highest quality system of public education; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission be directed to examine best administrative, fiscal, and service practices in the Commonwealth's public school divisions. In conducting the study, the Commission shall select from among the several school divisions, a sample that is representative of urban, suburban, and rural school divisions in the Commonwealth. The Commission shall also (i) consider, among other things, the work of the Commission on Efficiency in the Use of Public School Funds; (ii) identify those programs and services that might be consolidated, are not achieving their intended purpose, or for which the mission is no longer relevant or discernible; (iii) identify those services, such as transportation, maintenance, food service, and other initiatives that might be effectively out-sourced; and (iv) develop recommendations regarding revenue-saving initiatives and practices.

All agencies of the Commonwealth and those local school divisions included in the sample shall provide assistance to the Commission, upon request.

The Commission shall submit an interim report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 2003 Session of the General Assembly, and shall complete its work by November 30, 2003, and submit its final written findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 2004 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.