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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 59

Offered January 8, 2014

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Requesting the Department of Education to study the impact of certain policies on the quality of teachers' work in Virginia. Report.

Patrons—Krupicka, BaCote, Brink, Futrell, Hope, Kory, Lopez, Plum, Rasoul, Spruill and Tyler

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, Governor McDonnell declared 2013 as the "Year of the Teacher"; and

WHEREAS, in 2013, the General Assembly increased funding for teacher salaries and established the Strategic Compensation Grant Initiative to explore new ways to reward effective teachers; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly remains committed to the idea that Virginia's pre-kindergarten through high school teachers are professionals essential to the quality of our educational systems and the Commonwealth's future workforce; and

WHEREAS, ensuring that Virginia can attract and retain the most effective teachers is essential to providing a world-class education for every student in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, studies have shown that quality induction and mentoring are valuable components of the hiring of a new teacher and can lead to a longer and more successful teaching career; and

WHEREAS, studies have shown that due to extra responsibilities, teachers have less time to collaborate, mentor other teachers, share insights about students, grow in their professional practice, and design individualized instruction for students, despite the fact that these factors have been shown to improve teacher effectiveness; and

WHEREAS, other states and some local school boards in Virginia have implemented, are implementing, or are testing reforms to the teaching profession such as creating new compensation models and "career ladders" to provide qualified teachers with new ways to advance in their profession, receive extra pay, and assume greater leadership responsibilities while remaining primarily classroom teachers; and

WHEREAS, certain local school boards in Virginia find that the skills and training necessary for teachers to meet the needs of changing student populations and meet or exceed rising academic expectations require the school boards to recruit dual-certified teachers; and

WHEREAS, professional development has been reduced due to state and local budget austerity, makes it harder for teachers to receive ongoing training to implement new programs, improve their skills, and enhance their content knowledge; and

WHEREAS, average teacher salaries in Virginia are less than the national average and net pay for teachers has been decreasing, affecting teachers' ability to support their families and stay in the profession; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive review of the teaching profession and the factors affecting the quality of teachers' work, such as initial training and mentoring, professional development, teaching and planning time, salary, and career advancement opportunities, can help attract and retain quality teachers and strengthen the teaching profession in Virginia; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Department of Education be requested to study the impact of certain policies on the quality of teachers' work in Virginia.

In conducting its study, the Department, with input from the Board of Education, shall recommend policies and assess the impact of such policies on the quality of teachers' work for each of the following: (i) improved practices in the recruiting, training, and hiring of new teachers; (ii) new routes and programs for teacher licensure; (iii) enhanced opportunities for individuals to become teachers; (iv) increased time for planning and collaboration; (v) a "career ladder" system that includes professional levels, payment models, training, and potential leadership opportunities; (vi) teacher pay that is competitive nationally and among states with which Virginia competes for new hires; and (vii) improved professional development practices. For each of the above policies, the Department should consider past, current, and proposed policies in the Commonwealth, in other states, and in other countries. The Department shall assess the fiscal impact of implementing each of its recommended policies. The Department, with input and concurrence from the Board, shall rank the importance of implementing each of its recommended policies in the report of its findings and recommendations.

Technical assistance shall be provided to the Department of Education by each local school board in the Commonwealth. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Department of Education for this study, upon request.

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59 The Department of Education shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2014, and shall submit to
60 the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and a report of its findings and
61 recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summary and report
62 shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for
63 the processing of legislative documents and reports no later than the first day of the 2015 Regular
64 Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.