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SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 35

Offered February 13, 2014

Directing the Senate of Virginia to study the potential effects of the Commonwealth's mandating full-day kindergarten programs. Report.

Patrons—Barker and Ebbin

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, a majority of children begin their formal education with the entrance into kindergarten, where they develop basic skills and knowledge through creative play, social interaction, and developmentally appropriate formal instruction; and

WHEREAS, kindergarten also provides opportunities for young children to learn how to share, follow instructions, wait, and work in a team and within boundaries, and it fosters the development of cognitive, social, and emotional skills; and

WHEREAS, kindergarten is the gateway to the elementary school grades and prepares children for more formalized and structured academic settings; and

WHEREAS, longitudinal data demonstrate that children in full-day kindergarten programs show greater academic progress, including greater reading and mathematics achievement gains, than those in half-day programs; and

WHEREAS, full-day kindergarten can produce long-term educational gains, including for at-risk students; and

WHEREAS, investment in early childhood education programs can generate long-term savings; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That the Senate of Virginia be directed to study the potential effects of the Commonwealth's mandating full-day kindergarten programs. The Senate shall establish a study committee with a total membership of seven members of the Senate and six nonlegislative citizen members. Members shall be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules as follows: seven members of the Senate and six nonlegislative citizen members, two of whom shall be parents of children in elementary school or younger than elementary school age, two of whom shall be current or former elementary school teachers, one of whom shall be a superintendent of a school division in the Commonwealth, and one of whom shall be a local school board member from a school division in the Commonwealth. Nonlegislative citizen members shall be citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Unless otherwise approved in writing by the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Rules and the Clerk of the Senate, nonlegislative citizen members shall only be reimbursed for travel originating and ending within the Commonwealth of Virginia for the purpose of attending meetings. The study committee shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among its membership, who shall be members of the Senate.

In conducting its study, the study committee shall (i) examine current kindergarten programs in the Commonwealth and in other states; (ii) examine the intellectual, social, and emotional impacts of full-day kindergarten; (iii) assess the effect of requiring full-day kindergarten programs on staff, infrastructure, and scheduling requirements; (iv) consider the fiscal and policy implications of requiring full-day kindergarten programs in the Commonwealth; (v) consider any other matters the study committee deems relevant; and (vi) submit any findings and recommendations that the study committee deems appropriate.

Administrative staff support shall be provided by the Office of the Clerk of the Senate. Legal, research, policy analysis, and other services as requested by the chairman of the study committee shall be provided by the Division of Legislative Services. Technical assistance shall be provided by the Department of Education. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the study committee for this study, upon request.

The study committee shall be limited to four meetings for the 2014 interim, and the direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$16,760 without approval as set out in this resolution. Approval for unbudgeted nonmember-related expenses shall require the written authorization of the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Rules and the Clerk of the Senate.

The study committee shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2014, and the chairman of the study committee shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first day of the 2015 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall state whether the study committee intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a Senate document. The executive summary and report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures

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59 of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and
60 reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.