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## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 290

Offered January 16, 2015

*Expressing support for the establishment of the Governor's School for Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Hampton Roads.*

Patrons—Lewis, Alexander, McWaters and Wagner; Delegate: James

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, since the end of World War II, nearly one-half of all economic growth in the United States has resulted from innovation in scientific and technological fields, and market analysts predict that the fastest-growing occupations in the country will require a background in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics; and

WHEREAS, high school students in the United States regularly perform below international averages in mathematics and sciences, and only 15 percent of college graduates in the United States earn degrees in natural sciences or engineering; and

WHEREAS, in an effort to secure the nation's competitive edge in high-tech fields and provide Virginians with the tools and knowledge to spur economic growth through innovation, Norfolk Public Schools and Portsmouth Public Schools initiated a study on the feasibility of opening a Governor's School specializing in engineering and entrepreneurship; and

WHEREAS, the Governor's School for Innovation and Entrepreneurship would be a full-day, academic year school, similar to Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Annandale, which has enabled students throughout the region to achieve higher levels of proficiency in science, technology, engineering, and math; and

WHEREAS, while similar in approach to Thomas Jefferson High School, the Governor's School for Innovation and Entrepreneurship would be distinguished by its mission to teach students how to innovate through engineering and to build companies around breakthroughs for new products and services; and

WHEREAS, the Governor's School for Innovation and Entrepreneurship could significantly enhance the Tidewater region, equipping a new generation of entrepreneurs to create better job opportunities for Virginians by starting new companies that serve the Commonwealth and the United States through the development of innovative, high-tech products; and

WHEREAS, the Economic Development Authorities of Norfolk, Chesapeake, and Virginia Beach and the City Council of Suffolk have adopted resolutions endorsing the establishment of the Governor's School for Innovation and Entrepreneurship; and

WHEREAS, the Hampton Roads Community Foundation's Workforce Development Study Group, chaired by President Matthew Mulherin of Newport News Shipbuilding and President John Dever of Thomas Nelson Community College, have endorsed the Governor's School for Innovation and Entrepreneurship as a critical regional priority; and

WHEREAS, the feasibility study conducted by Dr. David Sawyer, a former superintendent of school divisions in multiples states and the former Fairfax County assistant superintendent who had responsibility for converting Thomas Jefferson High School into a Governor's School almost 30 years ago, concluded that the proposed Governor's School for Innovation and Entrepreneurship is feasible and enjoys sufficient support among the gifted student population and regional educational, business, civic, and political leaders to be successful; the study recommends the development of a plan to establish the Governor's School for Innovation and Entrepreneurship; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, the Greater Norfolk Corporation and a coalition of dozens of businesses and organizations in Chesapeake, Portsmouth, Virginia Beach, and Norfolk endorsed the establishment of a Governor's School for Innovation and Entrepreneurship; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly express support for the establishment of the Governor's School for Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Hampton Roads; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to Chesapeake Public Schools, Norfolk Public Schools, Portsmouth Public Schools, Suffolk Public Schools, and Virginia Beach City Public Schools, requesting that the organizations further disseminate copies of this resolution to their respective constituents so that they may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter.

INTRODUCED

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