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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 30

Offered January 8, 2014

Prefiled December 31, 2013

Establishing a joint committee of the Senate Committee on Education and Health and the House Committee on Education to study options for changing the number, frequency, or content of Standards of Learning assessments. Report.

Patron—Miller

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, elementary and secondary school students in the Commonwealth are required to take 34 criterion-referenced assessments associated with the Standards of Learning (SOL) in grades three through 11; and

WHEREAS, school accountability is an important goal of the public school system in the Commonwealth, but it must be balanced with meaningful, individualized student learning and student growth; and

WHEREAS, excessive testing and test preparation may inhibit the ability of teachers to cultivate an environment in which students are encouraged to think critically and develop a deep and nuanced understanding of the SOL subjects and course content; and

WHEREAS, the prosperity of the Commonwealth is linked to the ability of its public schools to train college and career ready high school graduates with critical thinking skills; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That a joint committee of the Senate Committee on Education and Health and the House Committee on Education be established to study options for changing the number, frequency, or content of Standards of Learning assessments. The joint committee shall have a total membership of 13 members. Two members of the Senate Committee on Education and Health shall be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules upon the recommendation of the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Education and Health and four members of the House Committee on Education to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates upon the recommendation of the Chairman of the House Committee on Education. The Secretary of Education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and one member from each of the following organizations shall serve ex officio with voting privileges and without compensation: the Virginia School Board Association, The Virginia Association of School Superintendents, the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals, the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, and the Virginia Education Association. Each respective entity and association shall reimburse each ex officio member for his travel expenses. The joint committee shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among its membership.

In conducting its study, the joint committee shall gather information and develop recommendations on:

1. The feasibility of changing the number, frequency, or content of SOL assessments administered to public school students in grades three through 11;

2. Which SOL assessments to eliminate and which SOL assessments to continue administering;

3. When to administer SOL assessments;

4. Whether to administer SOL assessments with essay and short answer questions rather than multiple choice questions;

5. Whether to allow students to forego SOL assessments if they achieve satisfactory scores on Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or other such examinations; and

6. The appropriateness of alternative assessments for students with disabilities and student with limited English proficiency.

In conducting its study, the joint committee shall consider the number, frequency, and content of benchmark assessments and other assessments that students are required to take in addition to SOL assessments.

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 joint committee shall be provided by the Division of Legislative Services. Technical assistance shall be provided by the Department of Education, the Secretary of Education, and the local school boards. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint committee for this study, upon request.

The joint committee shall be limited to four meetings for the 2014 interim. An estimated \$11,280 is allocated for speakers, materials, and other resources. Approval for unbudgeted nonmember-related expenses shall require the written authorization of the chairman of the joint committee and the respective

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59 Clerk. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both
60 Clerks shall be required.

61 No recommendation of the joint committee shall be adopted if a majority of the Senate members or a
62 majority of the House members of the joint committee (i) vote against the recommendation and (ii) vote
63 for the recommendation to fail notwithstanding the majority vote of the joint committee.

64 The joint committee shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2014, and the chairman shall
65 submit an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first day of the
66 2015 Regular Session of the General Assembly to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems. The
67 executive summary shall state whether the joint committee intends to submit to the General Assembly
68 and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate
69 document. The executive summary and the report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of
70 the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports
71 and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

72 Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint
73 Rules Committee. The Committee may approve or disapprove expenditures for this study, extend or
74 delay the period for the conduct of the study, or authorize additional meetings during the 2014 interim.