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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 1024

Offered February 17, 2017

Commending the Summer Program for Arts, Recreation and Knowledge.

Patrons—Mullin and Price

WHEREAS, Newport News Public Schools' Summer Program for Arts, Recreation and Knowledge is a successful award-winning summer enrichment program that is making a positive difference in the community; and

WHEREAS, the Summer Program for Arts, Recreation and Knowledge (SPARK) started as a pilot program in 2015, and it served 2,000 students from a portion of the city of Newport News that has a large population of at-risk youth; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, SPARK was expanded with assistance from a \$1.2 million grant from the Commonwealth of Virginia; the program was opened to a larger pool of students enrolled in Newport News Public Schools and 6,000 students participated; and

WHEREAS, SPARK is offered four days a week and is open to students in kindergarten through 12th grade, meals and transportation are included at no cost, and there is no tuition; and

WHEREAS, students who are enrolled in SPARK participate in hands-on activities, learn new skills, and explore their interests outside of the traditional classroom; and

WHEREAS, SPARK provides an engaging menu of enrichment activities that boost early learning, reading, and math skills; college readiness; and job training; the program also includes museum field trips, athletics and recreation, and art experiences; and

WHEREAS, summer learning programs such as SPARK reduce juvenile delinquency and help close the achievement gap; and

WHEREAS, the National School Boards Association honored the Newport News Public Schools with the Magna Award in 2016, recognizing SPARK as an exemplary and innovative example of learning that makes a difference in students' lives; and

WHEREAS, SPARK is a valuable summer learning opportunity for the children of Newport News who are at particular risk of losing the academic, social, and emotional gains they have accrued during the school year; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Newport News Public Schools Summer Program for Arts, Recreation and Knowledge, a successful award-winning summer enrichment program; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Dr. Ashby Kilgore, superintendent of Newport News Public Schools, as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the Summer Program for Arts, Recreation and Knowledge's efforts to expand learning opportunities for students and make a positive difference in the community.