

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA -- 1997 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 599

Expressing support for testing students upon the completion of required courses in the public schools of the Commonwealth.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 29, 1997

Agreed to by the Senate, February 19, 1997

WHEREAS, in 1995, the Board of Education implemented revised Standards of Learning (SOLs) in mathematics, English, science, social studies, and computer skills in grades five and eight, to provide a more rigorous educational program for students in the public schools; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education has developed an assessment program to measure the success of students and teachers in meeting the objectives of the revised Standards of Learning; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth is moving toward greater accountability in its educational programs, and many local school boards support accountability, and the implementation of an effective and accurate program to assess progress in meeting the new Standards of Learning; and

WHEREAS, accountability and effective performance assessment for students and teachers demand that the assessment of instruction and learning be provided promptly upon the completion of the required coursework; and

WHEREAS, because of the new test schedule established by the Board of Education for measuring student competency and the achievement of the new Standards of Learning, students who take Algebra I, World History, Geometry, and Biology in middle school and early in their high school careers will not be tested until two or more years, in some cases, after the completion of such courses; and

WHEREAS, as with most people, students are more likely to perform well on examinations and standardized tests when testing closely follows the completion of instruction; and

WHEREAS, students are unfairly disadvantaged when a substantial amount of time, even years, can elapse between instruction and testing under the new state assessment program; and

WHEREAS, students who take these courses will receive school credit for them before they are required to take the state assessment designed to measure competency in the subject area; and

WHEREAS, as a means to ensure accountability, students must demonstrate mastery of the new Standards of Learning as a condition for receiving course credit from the relevant school division; and

WHEREAS, the schedule for testing in subject areas under the new state assessment program far after the student has received instruction may not prove to be an accurate indicator of actual student achievement, and poor student performance on such tests would be demoralizing for students, their parents, teachers, schools, and the immediate community; and

WHEREAS, poor test outcomes, particularly given these circumstances, would not reflect positively on the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly supports the testing of students upon the completion of required courses in the public schools of the Commonwealth; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Board of Education be urged to reconsider and modify the test schedule in subject areas under the new state assessment program to provide a more accurate assessment of student performance, and equity to students and teachers; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit copies of this resolution to the Secretary of Education, the President of the Board of Education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Director of the Virginia School Boards Association, the Virginia Association of School Superintendents, and the President of the Virginia Education Association, requesting that they further disseminate copies of this resolution to their respective constituencies in order that they may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly in this matter.

ENROLLED

HJ599ER