

# 1997 SESSION

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## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 359

Offered January 20, 1997

*Establishing a special study panel to study the feasibility of developing an education cooperative in Hampton Roads.*

Patrons—Walker, Earley, Holland, Miller, Y.B., Schrock and Stolle; Delegates: Croshaw, Drake, Heilig, Robinson, Spruill, Tata, Wagner and Wardrup

Referred to the Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, in the Hampton Roads area, some school divisions have increasingly diverse populations with vastly different educational needs while other school divisions serve more homogenous populations and even rural areas, however, all of these school divisions are experiencing difficulties in meeting the demands of a technological society; and

WHEREAS, while the demands for additional public education services continue to increase, funding has not increased at a comparable rate; and

WHEREAS, private businesses have realized the benefits of and implemented purchasing cooperatives to save money when contracting for health benefits and supplies; and

WHEREAS, the advantages of joining together in a regional collaboration for the purchase of supplies and services such as health benefits, books, paper, and other needs could result in large savings to school divisions; and

WHEREAS, regional cooperative efforts could also result in increased buying power for small school divisions and collaborative approaches to resolving service delivery and policy issues for all school divisions; and

WHEREAS, regional cooperatives could provide benefits for school children through expanded and better services, for the member school divisions through cost avoidance and reallocation of resources, for local governing bodies through best practices for delivery of education services, and for the local citizens through savings to the taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, the superintendents of nine Hampton Roads school divisions are in agreement that the benefits and disadvantages of forming an education cooperative must be examined; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That a special study panel to study the feasibility of developing an education cooperative in Hampton Roads be established. The special study panel shall consist of the Superintendents and the chairmen of the school boards, or their designees, of the Cities of Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Newport News, Hampton and Poquoson, and the County of Southampton. The superintendents and the chairmen of the school boards of other school divisions in the Hampton Roads area may also be included on the special study panel, upon request. The special study panel shall also include the Superintendent of Public Instruction or his designee.

The special study panel shall evaluate the issues related to implementation of an education cooperative which shall: (i) identify local needs and issues; (ii) examine possible solutions for such local needs and issues which could be developed through a regional effort; (iii) identify any local policy differences which need to be resolved prior to implementation of an education cooperative; (iv) develop an agreement on how to resolve these local policy differences; (v) identify legal barriers to the formation of an education cooperative and the steps to resolve any such legal barriers; and (vi) identify the services and programs which would most appropriately be the subject of any such regional cooperative.

The special study panel shall provide at least a preliminary report of its study to the Chairmen of the Senate Committees on Education and Finance and the House Committees on Appropriations and Education by November 1, 1997.

The special study panel shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 1998 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

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