

996641128

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 691

Offered January 21, 1999

*Establishing a commission to examine the instructional needs of students and teachers in the public schools of the Commonwealth.*

Patrons—Bennett, Abbitt, Bryant, Clement, Cranwell, Croshaw, DeBoer, Dickinson, Dillard, Hamilton, Jackson, Murphy, Phillips, Robinson, Stump, Thomas, Van Yahres and Woodrum; Senator: Couric

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth's recently revised curriculum standards, the Standards of Learning (SOL), heralded as among the most demanding nationwide, signify a renewed commitment to rigorous academic pursuit, clearly defining what students must learn and what teachers must teach; and

WHEREAS, bolstering these Standards of Learning are new assessments that will measure academic progress and help make our schools more accountable for student learning; and

WHEREAS, essential to improved educational performance in Virginia's public schools is a renewed commitment to increasing capacity, as students, educators, schools, and divisions must be given the tools necessary to achieve educational excellence; and

WHEREAS, to meet this imperative, students must be given every opportunity to meet increased educational challenges, and preservice training and continuing professional development opportunities must be available for teachers and administrators to address academic and curriculum standards and to promote effective, innovative instructional methods that support application of knowledge; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to § 22.1-253.13:3, the Standards of Accreditation (SOA) for public schools must include student outcome measures, requirements and guidelines for instructional programs, staffing levels, pupil personnel services, special education program standards, auxiliary programs such as library and media services, community relations, and graduation requirements, as well as "the philosophy, goals, and objectives of public education in Virginia"; and

WHEREAS, acknowledging that the "mission of the public education system, first and foremost," is to prepare students with "essential academic knowledge and skills in order that they may be equipped for citizenship, work, and a private life that is informed and free," the SOA also include mandates for course offerings, school year and day standards, and staff levels and responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, the 1997 revisions to the SOA set forth new criteria and processes for individual school accreditation, and clearly state that schools shall be accredited "primarily" based on pupil achievement, as evidenced by scores on the Standards of Learning tests and other assessments; and

WHEREAS, various provisions of the Standards of Accreditation, such as the graduation requirements, mandated course offerings and staffing levels, and the addition of SOL assessments have compounded space and staffing needs in some school divisions, as well as prompted increased demand for instructional time, remediation, teacher re-training, and new instructional materials and textbooks; and

WHEREAS, while the Standards of Quality already acknowledge that "effective educational leadership ... and appropriate programs of professional development are essential for the advancement of public education in the Commonwealth," meeting the challenges of increasingly rigorous curriculum and accreditation standards may necessitate further examination of a variety of issues, such as specific teacher training needs and additional instructional time, the adequacy of the current school year and day, and the optimum balance of teaching duties and development opportunities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a commission to examine the instructional needs of students and teachers in the public schools of the Commonwealth be established. The commission shall be composed of 19 members to be appointed as follows: six members of the House of Delegates, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; five members of the Senate, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; one public school teacher, one school principal, and one local school division superintendent, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; one parent of a child who is enrolled in the public schools of the Commonwealth and one citizen member at large, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; and the Secretary of Education, the President of the Board of Education, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction, who shall serve ex officio with full voting privileges.

The commission shall consider, among other things, (i) current training requirements and professional development opportunities for educational personnel in the Commonwealth; (ii) the efficacy and appropriateness of the current school year and day to meet the goals and standards set by the Standards of Quality, the Standards of Accreditation, and the Standards of Learning; (iii) the interplay of current

INTRODUCED

HJ691

60 instructional hours, length of school year, and teacher contract requirements; (iv) optimum instructional  
61 loads, including classroom instruction, student assessment, lesson plan development, safety and  
62 disciplinary responsibilities, and in-service training; and (v) such other issues as it deems appropriate.

63 The Division of Legislative Services shall provide staff support for the study. The staffs of the House  
64 Committee on Appropriations and the Senate Committee on Finance shall provide technical assistance  
65 for the study. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Commission, upon  
66 request.

67 The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$10,750.

68 The Commission shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the  
69 Governor and the 2000 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division  
70 of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

71 Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint  
72 Rules Committee. The Committee may withhold expenditures or delay the period for the conduct of the  
73 study.