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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 498
AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the House Committee on Rules
on February 22, 1999)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Hanger)

Establishing the Commission on Educational Accountability.

WHEREAS, described as a tripod whose three legs include clearly stated goals, information about progress toward them, and positive and negative consequences, accountability initiatives in public education are as varied and diverse as the states and school systems implementing them, and may include various "indicators" of pupil and teacher performance, revised evaluation and accreditation initiatives, or post-graduation tracking of students; and

WHEREAS, accountability initiatives may also authorize state intervention in school operations and provide for financial incentives or penalties and other consequences; and

WHEREAS, the concept of educational accountability is not new to Virginia's public school system, as current constitutional and statutory provisions and regulations provide a plethora of mechanisms for the accountability of students, teachers, administrators, schools, and school divisions; and

WHEREAS, Virginia has made great progress in establishing educational accountability with the implementation of revised Standards of Learning for mathematics, English, science, and history and social science in 1995 and new Standards of Accreditation in 1997; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth's renewed commitment to strengthening accountability in public education is also evidenced in the work of a number of recent legislative and executive branch study committees, including the Commission on Accountability for Educational Excellence (HJR 168, 1996) and the Commission on the Future of Public Education (HJR 196, 1996); and

WHEREAS, to increase accountability for public education in Virginia, it is imperative to build on those existing and revised standards, programs, and initiatives that ensure the greatest educational opportunities; and

WHEREAS, school personnel, including teachers, school administrators, counselors, and instructional support staff, and parents should be active participants in the development of educational policies, and it is essential that school personnel and parents also share in the responsibility and accountability for achieving educational excellence; and

WHEREAS, further review of existing accountability initiatives addressing not only pupil performance but also instructional quality, school accreditation, safety and discipline, parental and community involvement, and administrative and fiscal issues is necessary to ensure continued progress in making our schools accountable for improved learning; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Commission on Educational Accountability be established. The Commission shall be composed of 20 members to be appointed as follows: five members of the Senate, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; six members of the House of Delegates, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House, in accordance with the principles of Rule 16 of the Rules of the House of Delegates; one parent of a child who is enrolled in the public schools of the Commonwealth, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; one public school teacher, one school principal, one local school division superintendent, one representative of the Virginia School Boards Association, and one citizen at large, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; 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 (i) review the Standards of Accreditation and the accountability mechanisms included therein; (ii) monitor the implementation of the Standards of Learning and revised assessments; (iii) consider the work and recommendations of other recent study committees, such as the Commission on the Future of Public Education (HJR 196, 1996), the Joint Subcommittee on Remediation (HJR 572, 1999), the Commission on Educational Infrastructure (HJR 135, 1996), the Standing Joint Subcommittee on School Dropout Prevention (HJR 241, 1996), and the Joint Subcommittee Studying the Efficacy and Appropriateness of Establishing a School Incentive Reward Program in the Commonwealth (HJR 165, 1996); (iv) develop recommendations for ways to increase the capacity of schools, teachers, and students to meet increasingly rigorous academic standards; (v) examine issues raised in Senate Joint Resolution No. 344 (1999) regarding the effects on the Commonwealth's young people of failure to obtain a diploma pursuant to requirements of the Standards of Accreditation for Public Schools in Virginia; (vi) evaluate the efficacy, appropriateness, and application of the Commonwealth's statutes, regulations, and policies governing the academic assessment of students who transfer into Virginia's public schools, in accordance with Senate Joint Resolution No. 389 (1999); (vii) examine issues raised in House Joint

60 Resolution 566 (1999) regarding the integration of the Standards of Learning with the secondary school
61 level curricula and workforce development skills; (viii) ascertain the impact of the Standards of
62 Accreditation on local school division budgets, in accordance with House Joint Resolution 586 (1999)
63 and House Joint Resolution 723 (1999); (ix) determine the feasibility and appropriateness of establishing
64 a certificate of completion for certain vocational programs in public high schools, pursuant to House
65 Joint Resolution 593 (1999); (x) determine the efficacy and appropriateness of the Commonwealth's
66 system of funding the Standards of Quality for public schools, pursuant to House Joint Resolution 657
67 (1999); (xi) study the instructional needs of students and teachers in the public schools of the
68 Commonwealth, pursuant to House Joint Resolution 691 (1999); (xii) examine the impact of the
69 Standards of Learning and the Standards of Accreditation on teachers, urban and small rural school
70 divisions, and educationally at-risk students, giving particular attention to the preparation of teachers and
71 time to instruct students to meet the Standards of Learning, the ability of urban and small rural school
72 divisions to meet and maintain the requirements for accreditation, the effect of the Standards of Learning
73 tests on grade promotion and retention of students and the awarding of high school diplomas, and the
74 remediation of students who fail the Standards of Learning tests, in accordance with House Joint
75 Resolution 721 (1999); (xiii) confer with the joint subcommittee established pursuant to Senate Joint
76 Resolution 447 (1999), regarding issues pertaining to overage students, adult students who are returning
77 to school, and vocational-technical education, and with other legislative study committees which have
78 been charged to examine related issues to avoid duplication of efforts; and (xiv) consider such other
79 issues as it deems appropriate. The Commission shall endeavor to address the many issues raised by the
80 aforementioned resolutions.

81 The Division of Legislative Services shall provide staff support for the study. The staffs of the
82 Senate Committee on Finance and the House Committee on Appropriations shall provide technical
83 assistance for the study. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Commission,
84 upon request.

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

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

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