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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 498
AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
 (Proposed by the Joint Conference Committee
 on February 26, 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; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has been charged to address a myriad of issues related to and impacting the Standards of Quality, the Standards of Learning, and the Standards of Accreditation; and

WHEREAS, due to the complexity of the issues and the interaction of public policies affecting education, it is necessary that special task forces be established to assist the Commission in its work, and that the Commission collaborate and coordinate its work with other legislative study committees requested to examine related matters to avoid duplication; 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, which shall include 11 legislative members, 6 nonlegislative members, and 3 ex officio members to be appointed as follows: five members of the Senate, of whom two shall be appointed to serve on the special task force created pursuant to House Joint Resolution 723 (1999), and one shall be appointed to serve on the special task force established pursuant to House Joint Resolution 566 (1999), to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; six members of the House of Delegates, of whom two shall be appointed to serve on the special task force established pursuant to House Joint Resolution 723 (1999), and two shall be appointed to serve on the special task force created pursuant to House Joint Resolution 566 (1999), 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, one public school teacher, and one school principal, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; one 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

60 on the Future of Public Education (HJR 196, 1996), the Joint Subcommittee on Remediation (HJR 572,
61 1999), the Commission on Educational Infrastructure (HJR 670, 1999), the Standing Joint Subcommittee
62 on School Dropout Prevention (HJR 241, 1996), and the Joint Subcommittee Studying the Efficacy and
63 Appropriateness of Establishing a School Incentive Reward Program in the Commonwealth (HJR 165,
64 1996); (iv) develop recommendations for ways to increase the capacity of schools, teachers, and students
65 to meet increasingly rigorous academic standards; (v) examine issues raised in Senate Joint Resolution
66 No. 344 (1999) regarding the effects on the Commonwealth's young people of failure to obtain a
67 diploma pursuant to requirements of the Standards of Accreditation for Public Schools in Virginia; (vi)
68 evaluate the efficacy, appropriateness, and application of the Commonwealth's statutes, regulations, and
69 policies governing the academic assessment of students who transfer into Virginia's public schools, in
70 accordance with Senate Joint Resolution No. 389 (1999); (vii) determine the feasibility and
71 appropriateness of establishing a certificate of completion for certain vocational programs in public high
72 schools, pursuant to House Joint Resolution 593 (1999); (viii) determine the efficacy and appropriateness
73 of the Commonwealth's system of funding the Standards of Quality for public schools, pursuant to
74 House Joint Resolution 657 (1999); (ix) study the instructional needs of students and teachers in the
75 public schools of the Commonwealth, pursuant to House Joint Resolution 691 (1999); (x) examine the
76 impact of the Standards of Learning and the Standards of Accreditation on teachers, urban and small
77 rural school divisions, and educationally at-risk students, giving particular attention to the preparation of
78 teachers and time to instruct students to meet the Standards of Learning, the ability of urban and small
79 rural school divisions to meet and maintain the requirements for accreditation, the effect of the
80 Standards of Learning tests on grade promotion and retention of students and the awarding of high
81 school diplomas, and the remediation of students who fail the Standards of Learning tests, in accordance
82 with House Joint Resolution 721 (1999); (xi) confer with the joint subcommittee established pursuant to
83 Senate Joint Resolution 447 (1999), regarding issues pertaining to overage students, adult students who
84 are returning to school, and vocational-technical education; (xii) collaborate, coordinate, and receive
85 regular reports of the Commission's special task force established pursuant to House Joint Resolution
86 566 (1999) studying the integration of the Standards of Learning with the secondary school level
87 curricula and workforce development skills; (xiii) collaborate, coordinate, and receive regular reports of
88 the Commission's special task force studying the impact of the Standards of Accreditation on local
89 school division budgets, in accordance with House Joint Resolution 586 (1999) and House Joint
90 Resolution 723 (1999); (xiv) collaborate and confer with the joint subcommittee established to examine
91 the efficacy and appropriateness of adjusting Standards of Quality funding for certain small school
92 divisions, pursuant to Senate Joint Resolution 481 (1999); (xv) confer and coordinate the work of the
93 Commission with other legislative study committees which have been charged to examine related issues
94 to avoid duplication; and (xvi) consider such other issues as it deems appropriate. The Commission shall
95 endeavor to address the many issues raised by the aforementioned resolutions.

96 The Division of Legislative Services shall provide staff support for the study. The Department of
97 Education, and the staffs of the Senate Committee on Finance and the House Committee on
98 Appropriations shall provide technical assistance for the study. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall
99 provide assistance to the Commission, upon request.

100 The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$21,500.

101 The Commission shall receive the interim reports of the special task forces by November 1, 2000,
102 and include such reports in its interim report to the Governor and the 2000 Session of the General
103 Assembly. The Commission shall complete its work in time to submit its final findings and
104 recommendations, including the final reports of the special task forces, to the Governor and the 2001
105 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated
106 Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

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