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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 281

Offered January 14, 2015

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Establishing a joint subcommittee to study the unique and specific challenges facing urban school divisions. Report.

Patrons—Edwards; Delegate: Rasoul

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, urban school divisions face unique and specific challenges; and

WHEREAS, in comparison with their rural and suburban counterparts, urban school divisions frequently have statistically higher concentrations of poverty; greater racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity; more children of immigrant families and more homeless students, and higher rates of student mobility; and

WHEREAS, school divisions across the Commonwealth with a free and reduced lunch population of 60 percent or more struggle to achieve fully accredited schools; and

WHEREAS, students in urban school districts achieve at a lower level than their rural and suburban counterparts; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution of Virginia tasks the General Assembly with ensuring that an education system of high quality is established and maintained for all children of the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study the unique and specific challenges facing urban school divisions. The joint subcommittee shall consist of 11 members that include six legislative members, four nonlegislative citizen members, and one ex officio member. Members shall be appointed as follows: two members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; four members of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates; two nonlegislative citizen members with a background in urban education to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; two nonlegislative citizen members with a background in urban education to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates; and the Superintendent of Public Instruction or his designee to serve ex officio with voting privileges. Nonlegislative citizen members shall be citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Unless otherwise approved in writing by the chairman of the joint subcommittee and the respective Clerk, nonlegislative citizen members shall only be reimbursed for travel originating and ending within the Commonwealth of Virginia for the purpose of attending meetings. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required. The joint subcommittee shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among its membership, who shall be members of the General Assembly.

In conducting its study, the joint subcommittee shall review the challenges faced by urban school divisions, identify best practices, and make recommendations regarding the appropriate instructional, organizational, and financial resources needed to address and enhance the performance of urban divisions.

Administrative staff support shall be provided by the Office of the Clerk of the Senate. Legal, research, policy analysis, and other services as requested by the joint subcommittee shall be provided by the Division of Legislative Services. Technical assistance shall be provided by the Department of Education. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint subcommittee for this study, upon request.

The joint subcommittee shall be limited to four meetings for the 2015 interim, and the direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$16,080 without approval as set out in this resolution. Approval for unbudgeted nonmember-related expenses shall require the written authorization of the chairman of the joint subcommittee and the respective Clerk. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required.

No recommendation of the joint subcommittee shall be adopted if a majority of the Senate members or a majority of the House members appointed to the joint subcommittee (i) vote against the recommendation and (ii) vote for the recommendation to fail notwithstanding the majority vote of the joint subcommittee.

The joint subcommittee shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2015, and the chairman shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and

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59 recommendations no later than the first day of the 2016 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The
60 executive summary shall state whether the joint subcommittee intends to submit to the General
61 Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or
62 Senate document. The executive summary and report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of
63 the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports
64 and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

65 Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint
66 Rules Committee. The Committee may approve or disapprove expenditures for this study, extend or
67 delay the period for the conduct of the study, or authorize additional meetings during the 2015 interim.