

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 15

Requesting the Department of Education to study the teacher licensure process and the assessment requirements therein for any inherent biases that may prevent minority teacher candidates from entering the profession. Report.

Agreed to by the Senate, March 5, 2020
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 4, 2020

WHEREAS, local school divisions throughout the Commonwealth are struggling to recruit and retain high-quality teachers; and

WHEREAS, the teacher workforce in the Commonwealth is becoming more racially homogeneous over time; and

WHEREAS, public elementary and secondary school populations continue to grow in both size and racial diversity; and

WHEREAS, this growth demands careful consideration of policy changes to address teacher shortages and the lack of teacher diversity in order to best serve the needs of all public school students, especially in light of recent supportive findings such as a study published by the Institute of Labor Economics that concludes that low-income black students who have at least one black teacher in elementary school are significantly more likely to graduate high school and consider attending college; and

WHEREAS, it is imperative to identify and eliminate any barriers to a sufficient and diverse teacher workforce in the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Department of Education be requested to study the teacher licensure process and the assessment requirements therein for any inherent biases that may prevent minority teacher candidates from entering the profession.

In conducting its study, the Department of Education shall review all relevant statutes, regulations, and data. Technical assistance shall be provided to the Department of Education by each school board in the Commonwealth. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Department of Education for this study, upon request.

The Department of Education shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2021, and shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summary and report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports no later than the first day of the 2022 Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

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