

Department of Planning and Budget 2020 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: SB142

House of Origin	<input type="checkbox"/> Introduced	<input type="checkbox"/> Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/> Engrossed
Second House	<input type="checkbox"/> In Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled

2. Patron: Dunnavant

3. Committee: Appropriations

4. Title: Virtual Virginia; availability.

5. Summary: Requires Virtual Virginia to be made available to every public middle school student in the Commonwealth and permits it to be available to every public elementary school in the Commonwealth. Existing law requires availability only to public high schools.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: Yes, Item 141.

7. Fiscal Impact Estimates: Preliminary. See Item 8.

8. Fiscal Implications: The Virtual Virginia Program currently is available only in public high schools. The Department of Education (DOE) contracts with a vendor to provide instruction through the Virtual Virginia Program. This contract allows 6,000 seats to be used by students at no additional cost (approximately 1,500 seats per grade, grades nine through twelve). In the 2019-2020 school year, all free seats are used.

To provide the same service to middle school students that Virtual Virginia currently provides to high school students, the program would need to provide 1,500 free seats per grade for grades six, seven, and eight. DOE estimates an additional state cost of \$622,500 per 1,500 seats, or a total estimated state cost of \$1,867,500. It could be a few years for the middle school expansion to grow to the extent that all 4,500 additional free seats are used. A House budget amendment provides \$933,750 in FY 2021 and \$933,750 in FY 2022 to support 2,250 additional Virtual Virginia course seats free of charge to school divisions to accommodate the expansion of Virtual Virginia into middle schools.

Currently, each public high school may enroll up to 15 students per course with no enrollment fees. If a school needs to register more than 15 enrollments in a Virtual Virginia course, the school may do so through the Expanded Enrollment Program with discounted enrollment fees. Without additional state funding to support middle schools, local school divisions would need to absorb the cost of the additional seats through the Expanded Enrollment Program. Any actual cost to local school divisions is indeterminate.

Alternatively, the state could cap the total number of free seats and charge tuition for additional seats.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: Department of Education, local school divisions

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No

11. Other Comments: This bill is identical to HB 1711.