VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

*An Act to amend and reenact § 2.2-208.1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the School Readiness Committee; renaming as Commission on Early Childhood Care and Education; purpose; membership; powers and duties.*

[H 1423]

Approved

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That § 2.2-208.1 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

**§ 2.2-208.1. Commission on Early Childhood Care and Education.**

A. In recognition of the fact that early care and education of young children is linked to academic success and workforce readiness, the ~~Secretary of Education, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, and upon receiving recommendations for appointments from the Virginia Education Association, the Virginia School Boards Association, the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, the Virginia Council for Private Education, the Virginia Child Care Association, the Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education, the Virginia Head Start Association, the Virginia Alliance for Family Child Care Associations, and the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, shall establish and appoint members to the School Readiness Committee (the Committee)~~ *Commission on Early Childhood Care and Education (the Commission) is hereby established for the purpose of providing recommendations for and tracking progress on the financing of a comprehensive birth-to-five early childhood care and education system as established in § 22.1-289.03 that provides stable, high-quality early childhood care and education services for families who need them the most, empowers parents with choices that meet their needs and preferences, and supports both school readiness and workforce participation.*

B. The ~~Committee~~ *Commission* shall have a total membership of no fewer than ~~27~~ *31* members that shall consist of ~~seven~~ *nine* legislative members, no fewer than ~~16~~ *18* nonlegislative citizen members, and four ex officio members. Members shall be appointed as follows: ~~four~~ *five* 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; ~~three~~ *four* members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules on the recommendation of the Chair of the Senate Committee on Education and Health; and no fewer than ~~16~~ *18* nonlegislative citizen members to be appointed by the Secretary of Education. *The Secretary of Education, upon receiving recommendations for appointments from the Virginia Council for Private Education, the Virginia Child Care Association, the Virginia Head Start Association, the Virginia Alliance for Family Child Care Associations, and the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, shall appoint nonlegislative citizen members to the Commission in a manner that ensures representation from each of the nine Ready Regions identified by the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (Ready Regions).* Nonlegislative citizen members shall include ~~at least three representatives of the office of the Secretary of Education, one representative of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, one representative of a baccalaureate public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth with a teacher education program, one representative of an associate-degree-granting public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth with a teacher education program,~~ one representative of the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, one representative of the Virginia Association of School Superintendents, ~~four~~ *one representative of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, three executive-level* representatives of the private business sector *who each represent different Ready Regions*, one ~~early childhood education teacher from a public early childhood education program, one early childhood education teacher from a private early childhood education program~~ *local government representative recommended by the Virginia Association of Counties and the Virginia Municipal League*, one administrator from a public early childhood education program, one administrator from a *faith-based* private early childhood education program, *one administrator from a non-faith-based private early childhood education program,* one administrator from a Head Start program, one administrator from a family child care program, *one representative from an organization advocating for children with disabilities,* ~~and one parent~~ *three parents* or ~~guardian~~ *guardians* of ~~a child~~ *children* who ~~is participating~~ *are age-eligible or who were recently age-eligible to participate* in early childhood care and education in the Commonwealth, *one educator from a public early childhood education program, and one educator from a private early childhood education program.* The ~~Commissioner of Social Services or his designee, the~~ Secretary of Education ~~or his designee, the Secretary of Health and Human Resources or his designee, and~~, *the*

*Secretary of Labor,* the Superintendent of Public Instruction ~~or his designee~~, *and the Commissioner of Social Services, or their designees,* shall serve ex officio with voting privileges.

C. ~~In recognition of the fact that one~~ *The Commission shall have the following powers and duties:*

*1. Expand access to and the quality of child care in all regions of the Commonwealth;*

*2. Analyze all existing and potential new opportunities for financing early childhood care and education programs with a focus on outcomes that are verifiable by data;*

*3. Retain, grow, and strengthen the quality of the Commonwealth's early childhood care and education workforce;*

*4. Gather and study information and data to accomplish its purposes as set forth in this section;*

*5. Gather and analyze data on the current and the projected five-year availability, quality, cost, and affordability of early childhood care and education throughout the Commonwealth for children from birth to age five, determine needs and priorities for early childhood care and education, and develop funding recommendations focused on family choice, access, affordability, and quality, giving due consideration to potential unforeseen impacts of funding and policy changes on the early childhood care and education sector;*

*6. Annually report on specific expenditures, outcomes, and impact, including the number of children served, demographics, child-level assessment data via the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP), classroom-level assessment data via the Unified Virginia Quality Birth to Five System (VQB5), teacher turnover and retention data, and parental employment data;*

*7. Support the development of an integrated early childhood longitudinal data process to capture and link access, quality, and educator data with preschool growth and school readiness outcome data through third grade and facilitate the sharing and use of such data and the seamless integration of the early childhood longitudinal data process with other student longitudinal data systems and processes; and*

*8. Monitor and support ongoing research and evaluation conducted by the Department of Education, the University of Virginia, and the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, and any other higher education or research institutions as deemed relevant, to continuously improve the quality of early childhood care and education services in the Commonwealth.*

*D. One* of the most important factors in learning outcomes for young children is ~~the capabilities,~~ *exposure to high-quality teacher-student interactions made possible through the hiring, training, and retention of skilled educators who support their growth and learning. In recognizing the importance of strong professional* supports~~,~~ and *competitive* compensation ~~of the~~ *to retaining skilled* educators ~~who support their growth and learning~~, the ~~primary goal of the Committee is to provide recommendations for and track progress on the financing of a comprehensive birth-to-five early childhood care and education system in the Commonwealth that addresses both affordability for families and adequate compensation for educators~~ *Commission shall prioritize financing early childhood care and education services using the Department of Education's cost of quality estimation model. Adoption of this model will ensure that early childhood care and education programs are resourced to attract and retain talented educators and consistently deliver high-quality services, yielding strong school readiness and literacy outcomes for participating young children.* As part of this effort, the ~~Committee~~ *Commission* should consider best practices and innovations in the private and public sector from across the Commonwealth and the country. The ~~Committee~~*Commission* should consider different sources of revenue and establish long-term goals and targets for affordable access to quality care and education for all birth-to-five children in the Commonwealth. Based on disparities in school readiness outcomes, the ~~Committee~~ *Commission* should ensure that all recommendations ~~address societal inequities and~~ address the needs of the Commonwealth's ~~more~~ *most* vulnerable children, families, and early childhood educators. The ~~Committee~~ *Commission* shall ~~periodically~~ review the goals set forth in this subsection and other priorities within the early childhood care and education ~~systems~~ *system* and ~~make~~ *submit no later than October 1 of each year* recommendations to ~~the Board of Education, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, the Department of Social Services, and the Chairmen of the House Committee on Education, the Senate Committee on Education and Health, the House Committee on Health, Welfare and Institutions, and the Senate Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services. The Board of Education shall review the recommendations of the Committee and submit to~~ *the Governor and* the Chairmen of the House Committee on *Appropriations, the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations, the House Committee on Commerce and Energy, the Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor, the House Committee on* Education, and the Senate Committee on Education and Health~~, in advance of the next regular session of the General Assembly, any comments on such recommendations that the Board of Education deems appropriate~~. *The Commission shall also post such recommendations on its website in a manner and format that ensure ease of access by interested parents and other members of the public.*

~~D.~~ *E.* Appointments to fill vacancies, other than by expiration of a term, shall be for the unexpired terms. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments. All legislative

members and nonlegislative citizen members may be reappointed.

~~E.~~ *F.* After the initial staggering of terms, legislative members and nonlegislative citizen members shall be appointed for terms of three years.

~~F.~~ *G.* No legislative member or nonlegislative citizen member shall serve more than two consecutive three-year terms. The remainder of any term to which a member is appointed to fill a vacancy shall not constitute a term in determining the member's eligibility for reappointment.

~~G.~~ *H.* The ~~Committee~~ *Commission* shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among its membership. *The chairman shall be a legislative member. The vice-chairman shall be a nonlegislative citizen member who is an executive-level representative of the private business sector.* A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum. The meetings of the ~~Committee~~ *Commission* shall be held *at least four times per year* at the call of the chairman or whenever the majority of the members so request.

~~H.~~ *I. Recommendations and other actions by the Commission shall require an affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the Commission.*

*J.* The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation shall provide for the facilitation of the work of the ~~Committee~~ *Commission* under the direction of the Secretary of Education or his designee and with the guidance of a steering ~~subcommittee~~ *committee* that includes the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of ~~Health and Human Resources~~ *Labor,* one legislative member, one *executive-level* representative of the private business sector, one representative of the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, and one ~~early childhood education teacher or administrator from a private early childhood education program~~ *parent or guardian of a child who is age-eligible or was recently age-eligible to participate in early childhood care and education in the Commonwealth.*

~~I.~~ *K.* The chairman may request and access the expertise of additional representatives and organizations relating to the ~~Committee's~~ *Commission's* goals and priorities. ~~In order to meet the federally mandated requirements for early childhood advisory councils, the chairman may establish and appoint additional members to advisory subcommittees to address areas of special concern and priority.~~

~~J. The Department of Education and the Department of Social Services shall provide staff support to the Committee. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Committee, upon request~~*L. The Commission may appoint, employ, and remove an executive director and such other persons as it deems necessary, and determine their duties and fix their salaries or compensation within the amounts appropriated therefor. The Commission may also employ experts who have special knowledge of the issues before it.*

*M. The Commission may request and shall receive from every department, division, board, bureau, commission, authority, or other agency created by the Commonwealth, or to which the Commonwealth is party, or from any political subdivision of the Commonwealth, cooperation and assistance in the performance of its duties.*

**2. That the initial appointments of nonlegislative citizen members by the Secretary of Education shall be staggered as follows: five members for a term of one year, six members for a term of two years, and seven members for a term of three years.**

**3. That the terms of the current members of the School Readiness Committee shall expire on the effective date of this act.**