



2019 VIRGINIA EDUCATION SUMMIT

*Joint Meeting of the Senate Education & Health
and House Education Committees*

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Key Takeaways

EARLY CHILDHOOD | ENSURE QUALITY AND ACCESS FOR ALL

There is considerable consensus among education, business, and political leaders about the strong returns that come from early childhood investment. During this session, legislators engaged with resource experts on the early childhood national landscape, the Governor's Executive Leadership Team on School Readiness, and priorities for the 2020 General Assembly.

LEGISLATIVE INTRODUCTION

✉ **Delegate Roslyn Tyler**, House District 75, Virginia House of Delegates

SESSION INTRODUCTION

✉ **Pamela Northam**, First Lady, Commonwealth of Virginia

MODERATOR

✉ **Kelly Chopus**, President and CEO, Robins Foundation

RESOURCE EXPERTS

✉ **Marica Cox Mitchell**, Director, Early Learning, Bainum Family Foundation

✉ **Jenna Conway**, Chief School Readiness Officer, Office of the Governor

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Early childhood systems are not funded to the degree that K-12 systems are funded. This lack of investment has adverse effects on families, particularly as childcare costs increase and become difficult to pay. Virginia ranks 33rd nationally in preschool funding and 37th nationally in early childhood governance.
- In the Commonwealth:
 - ▶ 40 percent of students entering kindergarten each year lack the key literacy, math, and social emotional skills that predict success.
 - ▶ Two-thirds of children under age six have all available parents in the workforce.
 - ▶ 24 percent of economically disadvantaged four-year-olds and 72 percent of economically disadvantaged three-year-olds lack access to quality preschool.
- Whether or not states perform well on significant benchmarks, such as third-grade reading, largely depends on that state's ability to develop and effectively govern its systems of childcare and early childhood education.
- Because there are various funding streams, there are also a variety of requirements for early childhood educators, resulting in inconsistencies in quality across settings.
- The early childhood community has not set a standard for what quality teaching looks like and the types of preparation programs that are adequate.
- Compensation for the early childhood workforce is consistently low; many child care workers receive public assistance.

ACTION ITEMS FOR LEGISLATORS:

- Continue to leverage funding opportunities like the recent \$9.9 million Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG-B5), while simultaneously finding ways to open new statewide and local funding streams for early childhood investment.
- When considering how to increase access and quality of early childhood systems in the Commonwealth, policymakers should invest in early childhood educators.
- Ensure that the Commonwealth's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) is funded properly in the 2020 General Assembly.
- Consider the consolidation of oversight and accountability for childcare and early childhood education.

KEY RESOURCES

- [The Case for Early Childhood Education Reform](#) is a two-page brief covering the state of early childhood in the Commonwealth that offers recommendations for legislatures to consider in the short- and long-term.
- [Power to the Profession](#) is a national collaboration to define the early childhood profession by establishing a unifying framework for career pathways, knowledge, and competencies, qualifications, standards, and compensation.
- [The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation's 2019 Annual Report](#) sheds light on systems building, mixed delivery systems, and early childhood workforce investment happening in the Commonwealth.

HIGHER EDUCATION | STRATEGIES AND PATHWAYS TO SUPPORT POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

To help students earn their postsecondary degrees in a timely and cost-efficient manner, state leaders and institutions must create the conditions to support students in that goal. Legislators engaged with resource experts on the work underway in the Commonwealth, such as the Passport Initiative and ADVANCE, to help students transfer previously-earned credits with ease.

LEGISLATIVE INTRODUCTION

- ✉ **Senator Mamie Locke**, Senate District 2, Senate of Virginia

RESOURCE EXPERTS

- ✉ **Dr. Michelle Marks**, Vice President for Academic Innovation & New Ventures, George Mason University
- ✉ **Peter Blake**, Director, State Council for Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV)

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- When it comes to college completion, state leaders should start with the following questions:
 - ▶ What are your desired college completion outcomes?
 - ▶ What student subpopulations need the most support in order to complete?
- SCHEV aims to have Virginia be the most educated state in the country by 2030. To accomplish such, Virginia will need to achieve its postsecondary attainment goal of 70 percent by that time.
- One of the greatest issues seen in the Commonwealth's systems of higher education is dropouts. The number of students who have left higher education is greater than it was [five years ago](#).
- Ninety-nine percent of jobs the U.S. has created since the Great Recession require a degree or credential beyond high school. Students who complete a postsecondary degree and/or credential (i.e. associate degree) before entering a four-year institution are more likely to graduate from that institution than students who enroll straight into a four-year institution from high school.
- Streamlining credit transfer processes is critical to ensuring that students can complete their postsecondary degrees.
 - ▶ This is being done through the ADVANCE Initiative, which aligns the systems of GMU and NOVA institutions so that all NOVA credits can transfer to GMU. Students only have to complete one application for both institutions, and students have access to the same advisor even after transferring. A student participating in this initiative also saves \$15,000 in obtaining their bachelor's degree.

ACTION ITEMS FOR LEGISLATORS:

- Focus on creating targeted investments for counselors both at the secondary and postsecondary levels so that students have more readily available guidance in questions relating to enrollment in and navigating through higher education. This investment is critical, given that the student-to-counselor [ratio](#) in the United States is 455:1.
- Convene institution leaders in your district and facilitate a dialogue about how policies can be aligned in ways that support students who transfer from one institution to another.

KEY RESOURCES

- [Tackling Transfer: A Guide to Convening Community Colleges and Universities to Improve Transfer Student Outcomes](#) is a resource published by the Aspen Institute's College Excellence Program that contains instructions for how state leaders can organize workshops where institution leaders develop policies to support transfer students.
- [The SCHEV Transfer Tool](#) is a central repository of course equivalents intended to aid student mobility from Virginia two-year institutions to the Virginia four-year public college or university of their choice.

HIGHER EDUCATION | A CONVERSATION ON COLLEGE ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY

College access and affordability is a topic that has dominated headlines throughout the country for several years, and state legislatures have been grappling with this complex issue. During this session, legislators conversed with resource experts on strategies that could help make the Commonwealth's colleges more affordable; legislators also looked at steps being taken by other state legislatures in this effort.

LEGISLATIVE INTRODUCTION

- ✉ **Delegate David Bulova**, District 37, Virginia House of Delegates

RESOURCE EXPERTS

- ✉ **Mamie Voight**, Vice President of Policy Research, Institute for Higher Education Policy
- ✉ **John R. Broderick**, President, Old Dominion University

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Since 2000, and particularly since the Great Recession, state per-pupil investment in higher education has decreased.
- State disinvestment is the primary contributor to increases in tuition costs. In 2000, state investment, on average, covered 71 percent of tuition costs. In 2018, that number dropped down to 54 percent. In the Commonwealth, state investment, on average, covered 64 percent of tuition costs. In 2018, that number was 46 percent.
- Additional trends include the rise of free and debt-free college. Programs have been implemented in [Tennessee](#) and [New York](#) with these approaches.
- When approaching higher education access and affordability, tuition should not be the only factor addressed; high non-tuition costs, such as room and board, adversely affect a student's ability to enroll and/or complete college.
- Old Dominion University has a proven track record in working with low-income and first generation students to enroll, navigate, and graduate in a timely and cost-efficient manner.
 - ▶ One-third of Old Dominion's 24,000 students are Pell-eligible. More than 40 percent of the University's graduates are first-generation college graduates.
 - ▶ Because the University sits on the lower end of the Commonwealth's institutions in terms of state funding, leadership has been quite deliberate in deciding how to allocate its funds; the University has prioritized student-success investment as well as a focus on faculty, coaching, and [STEM-H disciplines](#).

ACTION ITEMS FOR LEGISLATORS:

- Prioritize the needs of low-income students and adult learners when financing institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth.
- Engage with institutional leaders on ways the General Assembly can target their funding for institutions in a way that benefits student success.

KEY RESOURCES

- [SHEEO's Higher Education Financing Report](#) provides a deep dive in national and state trends in various subtopics in higher education financing.
- [Do Tennessee Promise and New York's Excelsior Scholarship Help Students With Limited Means Afford College?](#) is a report put together by the Institute for Higher Education Policy covering the Tennessee Promise and New York Excelsior programs.

CLASSROOM INNOVATION | USING TECHNOLOGY TO REDEFINE HOW STUDENTS LEARN

When graduating high school, students should be equipped with the skills, knowledge, and tools to have a rich learning experience and be prepared for postsecondary education and the workforce. To accomplish this, more equitable school systems must be built with opportunities for deeper learning for all students. During this session, legislators engaged with resource experts on the benefits of technological use and innovative learning in the classroom, and equally important, discussed the resource needs of districts to be able to use these means to form more innovative and equitable systems for all students, both in and out of the classroom.

LEGISLATIVE INTRODUCTION

- ✉ **Delegate Glenn Davis**, House District 84, Virginia House of Delegates

RESOURCE EXPERTS

- ✉ **Dr. James Lane**, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Virginia Department of Education
- ✉ **Maria Worthen**, Vice President for State and Federal Policy, Aurora Institute

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Broadband is foundational in the effort to make the best use of technology and innovation in the classroom; schools must be well-connected to take advantage of tech-related opportunities. In 2015, 46 percent of the schools in the Commonwealth had bandwidth strength of at least 100 kbps. In 2019, that number is 100 percent.
- Across the country, new innovative methods are being introduced to secondary and postsecondary education, including innovation zones, credit flexibility, and competency-based education.
- Introducing technology to the classroom does not automatically foster greater outcomes; technology, however, can serve as a great tool for creating more equitable school systems, as students in underserved schools will have access to quality teaching content and learning opportunities.
- Though technology can aid in equity, equitable systems cannot be built without having a high-quality teacher in every classroom.
- Rural districts can be among the largest beneficiaries of instructional technology, particularly out of the classroom. The issue, however, lies in the “homework gap,” which describes a child, family, and/or community’s lack of a strong broadband network.

ACTION ITEMS FOR LEGISLATORS:

- The Virginia Department of Education is not able to collect data on a question unless a state mandate allows for it. Consider developing legislation creating a state mandate for the Department of Education to quantify the “homework gap” by collecting data on internet access in the home for students.

KEY RESOURCES

- [From policy to practice: How competency-based education is evolving in New Hampshire](#) examines New Hampshire’s statewide policy to abolish the Carnegie Unit and establish competency-based education.
- [The Digital Divide: A Look at Students with Very Limited Access to Electronic Devices at Home](#) is a report developed by the ACT Center for Equity in Learning that covers geographical, income-based, and racial/ethnic disparities in technological access for students.

DINNER | INCREASING ATTAINMENT IN THE MODERN ECONOMY

Over dinner, legislators engaged with America Achieves Chairman & CEO Jon Schnur on roles state leaders could play in increasing educational attainment to develop a strong workforce and engaged citizenry. Schnur talked about the importance of postsecondary goals and highlighted best practices seen throughout the country helping students attain the degrees and credentials necessary for workforce readiness.

WELCOME

✉ **Anne Holton**, Interim President, George Mason University

INTRODUCTION

✉ **Laura Fornash**, Senior Vice President, McGuireWoods Consulting, Board Member, The Hunt Institute

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

✉ **Jon Schnur**, Chairman & CEO, America Achieves

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Since 2000, the United States has seen little progress in the Program for International Student Assessment, an assessment given internationally to 15-year-old students in reading, math, and science every three years.
 - ▶ The top performing systems of education internationally share a commitment to a long-term educational agenda, the establishment of clear standards, strong professional development for teachers and administrators, and strong investments in teachers, vulnerable student populations, childcare, early childhood education, and primary school.
 - ▶ Top-performing systems, in terms of teacher recruitment, often recruit teachers who graduate in the top third of their postsecondary classes.
- In 1973, 25 percent of jobs in the United States required some form of postsecondary education. By 2020, 65 percent of jobs will require some form of postsecondary education.
 - ▶ Options for postsecondary education include general education and vocational education paths. Both paths can help individuals secure in-demand jobs, but each path has a different economic trajectory. The vocational path often leads to greater income increases early in one's career, but those increases eventually plateau later in life.
- Students in the United States are graduating high school at higher rates than ever, but they are largely unprepared for the rapidly-changing workforce.

ACTION ITEMS FOR LEGISLATORS:

- Continue and increase investments in career-based programs, like career and technical education and apprenticeships, that are designed to help students gain workforce experience while they are in school.
- Policymakers should convene business and education leaders in their districts to discuss what skills businesses are looking for and how high schools can deliver on preparing students for in-demand jobs, particularly students in the 11th and 12th grade.
- Tour schools of education and speak with educator preparation programs (EPP) leaders in your district about the design and rigor of their teacher preparation programs and curricula.

KEY RESOURCES

- [General Education, Vocational Education, and Labor-Market Outcomes over the Lifecycle](#) investigates the differences in employment rates and income trajectories between those pursuing vocational education and those pursuing general education.

TEACHER PREPARATION | CREATING PATHWAYS TO EXCELLENCE

Research and experience show that effective, well-prepared teachers are the most influential in-school determinants of student achievement, particularly for disadvantaged students. This session covered the state of teacher preparation programs throughout the Commonwealth, focusing on effective approaches to prepare teachers for the K-12 system and how to expand those practices.

LEGISLATIVE INTRODUCTION

- ✉ **Delegate Schuyler VanValkenburg**, District 72, Virginia House of Delegates

RESOURCE EXPERTS

- ✉ **Peggy Brookins**, President & CEO, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
- ✉ **Sandi Jacobs**, Principal, EducationCounsel
- ✉ **Dr. Mark Ginsberg**, Dean, College of Education and Human Development, George Mason University

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- When preparing teachers, educator preparation programs must consider the following:
 - ▶ Teachers must be prepared for the needs of the 21st century classroom;
 - ▶ Teachers must be able to connect content and pedagogy; having strong subject knowledge is one thing, but that knowledge must be communicated in a way that strongly contributes to greater student achievement and resonates well with students. Having cultural relevance in the classroom is incredibly important, in addition to having the ability to manage a variety of behaviors in the classroom.
 - ▶ Teacher diversity must be considered. The Commonwealth's student population is increasingly diverse, as 51 percent of its student population is non-white. Teacher diversity data is not collected in the Commonwealth, but national data reveals that 80 percent are white.
- The rising and persistent teacher shortage is a serious problem in both the Commonwealth and United States.
 - ▶ This trend makes the Commonwealth's education system increasingly vulnerable; there has been a 40 percent drop in EPP enrollment. Overall, teacher shortages can be seen as among the greatest threats to economic development and vitality in the Commonwealth.
 - ▶ The Virginia General Assembly addressed this threat by allowing teachers to train at the undergraduate level and go straight into the classroom after obtaining their undergraduate education degrees.

ACTION ITEMS FOR LEGISLATORS:

- Convene and collaborate with local leaders to devise strategies to better market the profession to students as early as middle and high school.
- On top of introducing undergraduate education degrees, continue to find ways to streamline the process of getting into the classroom while emphasizing strength in the teacher preparation program.
- Identify the areas of the Commonwealth with the most pressing need for teachers, and work with business and education leaders to encourage prospective teachers to enter those classrooms.

KEY RESOURCES

- [What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do](#) is a report by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards advocating for five core propositions for how teachers can be well-prepared for the 21st century classroom.

TEACHER COMPENSATION | PAY AND RECRUITMENT

During the 2019 General Assembly, Virginia's legislature passed the largest teacher pay increase the Commonwealth in over a decade, but questions remain on what next steps should be taken to bring teacher pay closer, if not to, the national average. This session gave legislators the opportunity to draw lessons from neighboring states in this effort, focusing on the impact bringing pay closer to the national average has on teacher recruitment.

LEGISLATIVE INTRODUCTION

✉ **Delegate Roxann Robinson**, House District 27, Virginia House of Delegates

MODERATOR

✉ **Secretary Atif Qarni**, Secretary of Education, Commonwealth of Virginia

RESOURCE EXPERTS

✉ **Dr. Dietra Trent**, Chief of Staff, Office of the President, George Mason University, Former Secretary of Education, Commonwealth of Virginia

✉ **Dr. Josh McGee**, Senior Fellow, Manhattan Institute

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The Virginia General Assembly passed a 5 percent statewide teacher salary increase, the largest such increase in 15 years.
- Another key achievement in this space was the inclusion of the teaching profession in the Virginia Economy Workforce Grant. Governor's Offices in Virginia have also worked recently to expand teacher residencies and increase K-12 funding.
- Throughout the country, activism in education funding has increased.
 - ▶ Inflation-adjusted spending per-pupil in Virginia has increased by 169 percent since 1970. This increase, while above the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) average, is below the national average.
 - ▶ Student-teacher ratios have decreased over time, currently sitting at 16:1 nationally and 14:1 in the Commonwealth.
 - ▶ Schools have seen significant growth in administrative personnel since 1970.
 - ▶ Retirement costs have grown significantly, eating into district and state budgets. Much of this growth in costs comes from growing pension debt.
 - ▶ Teacher salaries, when measured in constant dollars, have been stagnant since 1990. Virginia's teacher salaries, under the same measurement, have declined since 1990.

ACTION ITEMS FOR LEGISLATORS:

- When giving state dollars to school districts, consider whether local leaders have much flexibility in using those dollars. Collaborate with local leaders to see how those dollars can be used most effectively.
- Consider whether the state's retirement system is financially sustainable and can provide adequate benefits to teachers.

KEY RESOURCES

- [The Hidden Half: School Employees Who Don't Teach](#) is a report covering the growth of non-teaching personnel in schools and the effects this growth has on school budget allocations.

PROFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVES | ATTRACTING AND RETAINING TOP TEACHING TALENT

Following educator-centered policy discussions, legislators sat down with principals and superintendents to gather an on-the-ground perspective of how certain factors, including compensation, impact their work in recruiting teachers for their schools and districts, especially in hard-to-staff positions.

LEGISLATIVE INTRODUCTION

- ✉ **Javaid Siddiqi, Ph.D.**, President & CEO, The Hunt Institute

RESOURCE EXPERTS

- ✉ **Dr. John B. Gordon III**, Superintendent, Suffolk City Public Schools
- ✉ **Dr. Shawn Green**, Principal, Colonel Fred Cherry Middle School
- ✉ **Dr. Maria Pitre-Martin**, Superintendent, Petersburg City Public Schools
- ✉ **Ms. Belinda Urquhart**, Principal, Walnut Hill Elementary School
- ✉ **Dr. Rosa Atkins**, Superintendent, Charlottesville City Public Schools
- ✉ **Dr. Erin Kershner**, Principal, Venable Elementary School
- ✉ **Dr. Eric Bond**, Superintendent, Augusta County Public Schools
- ✉ **Mr. Larry Landes**, Principal, Fort Defiance High School
- ✉ **Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr.**, Superintendent, Alexandria City Public Schools
- ✉ **Mr. Rene Paschal**, Principal, Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- For many districts in the Commonwealth, the ability to recruit teachers for the classroom is increasingly difficult due to the shrinking pool of teachers.
- Recruitment is critical and needs to improve; equally, if not more important, is a school's ability to retain its teachers.
- When recruiting teachers, financial and non-financial incentives must be brought to the table. Teachers often leave or don't come to schools when leadership is inadequate.
- Partnerships between K-12 and higher education could serve as a good method for making the recruiting process more effective.

ACTION ITEMS FOR LEGISLATORS:

- Convene K-12 and higher education leaders in your district to discuss strategies for strengthening the teacher pipeline.
- Continue to find ways to get teachers into the classroom faster.
- Assess school testing frequency and determine whether the number of tests given per academic year can be deemed adequate.

BROADBAND AND THE NEW VIRGINIA ECONOMY

To succeed in tomorrow's economy, today's students in the Commonwealth must have access to scalable and affordable broadband infrastructure. This session focused on the work the Commonwealth has done in recent years to expand broadband, in addition to what policymakers could do to ensure all students are able to leverage the benefits that come with broadband outside the classroom.

LEGISLATIVE INTRODUCTION

✉ **Senator Louise Lucas**, Senate District 18, Senate of Virginia

RESOURCE EXPERTS

✉ **Evan Feinman**, Chief Broadband Advisor, Office of the Governor of Virginia, Executive Director, Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission

✉ **Kristie Proctor**, Executive Director, Virginia Rural Center

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Broadband access is critical for the following reasons:
 - ▶ It has a significant political and social demand;
 - ▶ It has a significant economic demand; and
 - ▶ Expanding broadband to underserved communities is an ethically sound decision.
- Broadband access generates significant economic activity. It also mitigates the risks of the Commonwealth's most vulnerable communities by allowing them the opportunity to access connective technologies, many of which are critical for health and educational opportunities.
- Broadband can be made accessible, but it can only be a benefit to all communities if made affordable. Median broadband cost has decreased by 84 percent in the past five years.
- Rural communities will struggle without access to good broadband; children in rural areas have less educational and social opportunities, so ensuring that high-speed internet is accessible, particularly in communal areas like libraries, is critical for giving kids educational opportunities outside of school.

ACTION ITEMS FOR LEGISLATORS:

- Continue work with the Governor's Office and the Chief Broadband Advisor to assess the financial requirements necessary for fulfilling the Commonwealth's goals in broadband.
- When expanding broadband outside of schools, prioritize rural and vulnerable communities that would greatly benefit from access to connective technologies.
- Consider investing in strengthening broadband infrastructure in schools so that students and educators can access technologies that support deeper learning experiences.

KEY RESOURCES

- [Broadband and Local Growth](#) investigates the impact broadband expansion has on economic growth, revealing that this expansion strongly and positively impacts areas with lower population densities.
- [Commonwealth Connect](#) is the Governor's plan to connect all Virginians to high speed internet.

Key Takeaways



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