2026 Special Session I

Budget Bill - HB30 (Chapter 1)

Direct Aid to Public Education

Item 125

	First Year - FY2027	Second Year - FY2028
State Education Assistance Programs (17800)	**$11,700,340,017**	**$11,622,039,898**
Standards of Quality for Public Education (SOQ) (17801)	$9,782,838,888	$9,706,107,560
Financial Incentive Programs for Public Education (17802)	$955,225,128	$968,731,129
Financial Assistance for Categorical Programs (17803)	$66,550,835	$69,476,041
Distribution of Lottery Funds (17805)	$895,725,166	$877,725,168
Fund Sources:		
General	$10,058,099,621	$10,331,799,500
Special	$1,020,000	$1,020,000
Commonwealth Transportation	$1,495,230	$1,495,230
Trust and Agency	$1,427,725,166	$1,152,725,168
Dedicated Special Revenue	$212,000,000	$135,000,000

Authority: Standards of Quality for Public Education (SOQ) (17801): Article VIII, Section 2, Constitution of Virginia; Chapter 667, Acts of Assembly, 1980; §§ 22.1-176 through 22.1-198, 22.1-199.1, 22.1-199.2, 22.1-213 through 22.1-221, 22.1-227 through 22.1-237, 22.1-253.13:1 through 22.1-253.13:8, 22.1-254.01, Code of Virginia; Title 51.1, Chapters 1, 5, 6.2, 7, and 14, Code of Virginia; P.L. 91-230, as amended; P.L. 93-380, as amended; P.L. 94-142, as amended; P.L. 98-524, as amended, Federal Code.

Financial Incentive Programs for Public Education (17802): §§ 22.1-24, 22.1-289.1 through 22.1-318, Code of Virginia; P.L. 79-396, as amended; P.L. 89-10, as amended; P.L. 89-642, as amended; P.L. 108-265, as amended; Title II P.L. 99-159, as amended, Federal Code.

Financial Assistance for Categorical Programs (17803): Discretionary Inclusion; Treaty of 1677 between Virginia and the Indians; §§ 22.1-3.4, 22.1-108, 22.1-199 through 22.1-212.2:2, 22.1-213 through 22.1-221, 22.1-223 through 22.1-237, 22.1-254, Code of Virginia; P.L. 89-10, as amended; P.L. 91-230, as amended; P.L. 93-380, as amended; P.L. 94-142, as amended; P.L. 94-588; P.L. 95-561, as amended; P.L. 98-211, as amended; P.L. 98-524, as amended; P.L. 99-570; P.L. 100-297, as amended; P.L. 102-73, as amended; P.L. 105-220, as amended, Federal Code.

Distribution of Lottery Funds (17805): §§ 58.1-4022 and 58.1-4022.1, Code of Virginia

Appropriation Detail of Education Assistance Programs (17800)

Standards of Quality (17801)	**FY 2027**	**FY 2028**

Basic Aid	$5,081,690,613	$5,014,145,418
Sales Tax	$1,880,400,000	$1,928,800,000
Textbooks	$104,933,124	$104,255,549
Vocational Education	$99,355,854	$98,577,877
Gifted Education	$44,945,714	$44,648,013
Special Education	$568,016,130	$564,150,728
Special Education Add-On	$136,344,292	$135,693,303
At-Risk Add-On (split funded)	$869,327,557	$816,632,269
English Learner Teachers	$218,947,673	$224,876,211
VRS Retirement (includes RHCC)	$477,915,367	$474,705,540
Social Security	$256,500,987	$254,828,851
Group Life	$14,143,968	$14,010,470
Remedial Summer School	$30,317,609	$30,783,331
Total	**$9,782,838,888**	**$9,706,107,560**
Incentive Programs (17802)		
Compensation Supplement	$252,476,642	$512,253,786
Governor's Schools	$34,218,495	$35,847,352
Clinical Faculty	$318,750	$318,750
Career Switcher Mentoring Grants	$279,983	$279,983
Special Education - Endorsement Program	$437,186	$437,186
Special Education – Vocational Education	$200,089	$200,089
Virginia Workplace Readiness Skills Assessment	$308,655	$308,655
Math/Reading Instructional Specialists Initiative	$1,834,538	$1,834,538
Early Reading Specialists Initiative	$3,476,790	$3,476,790
Breakfast After the Bell Incentive	$1,074,000	$1,074,000
School Meals Expansion	$1,600,000	$1,600,000
School Construction Assistance Program	$384,000,000	$135,000,000
Supplemental Payment in Lieu of Sales Tax on Food and Personal Hygiene Products	$275,000,000	$276,100,000
Total	**$955,225,128**	**$968,731,129**
Categorical Programs (17803)		
Adult Education	$1,051,800	$1,051,800

Adult Literacy	$2,480,000	$2,480,000
American Indian Treaty Commitment	$63,187	$66,891
School Lunch Program	$5,801,932	$5,801,932
Special Education - Homebound	$5,760,242	$5,817,838
Special Education - Jails	$5,117,608	$6,208,971
Special Education - State Operated Programs	$46,276,066	$48,048,609
Total	**$66,550,835**	**$69,476,041**
Lottery Funded Programs (17805)		
At-Risk Add-On (split funded)	$138,663,607	$184,932,099
Foster Care	$12,194,417	$13,126,037
Special Education - Students with Intensive Support Needs Application	$112,686,265	$107,686,265
Early Reading Intervention	$49,343,298	$48,987,538
Mentor Teacher	$1,000,000	$1,000,000
K-3 Primary Class Size Reduction	$173,342,279	$172,013,813
School Breakfast Program	$19,576,470	$20,389,350
SOL Algebra Readiness	$19,635,415	$19,479,312
Infrastructure and Operations Per Pupil Funds	$336,361,275	$276,361,277
Regional Alternative Education	$10,633,320	$11,427,352
Individualized Student Alternative Education Program (ISAEP)	$2,247,581	$2,247,581
Career and Technical Education – Categorical	$11,681,872	$11,681,872
Project Graduation	$1,387,240	$1,387,240
Race to GED (NCLB/EFAL)	$2,410,988	$2,410,988
Path to Industry Certification (NCLB/EFAL)	$1,831,464	$1,831,464
Supplemental Basic Aid	$979,675	$1,012,980
Supplemental Support for Accomack and Northampton	$1,750,000	$1,750,000
Total	**$895,725,166**	**$877,725,168**
Technology – VPSA	$56,002,800	$56,163,600
Security Equipment - VPSA	$12,000,000	$12,000,000

Payments out of the above amounts shall be subject to the following conditions:

A. Definitions

1. "March 31 Average Daily Membership," or "March 31 ADM" - The responsible school division's average daily membership for grades K-12 including (1) handicapped students ages 5-21 and (2) students for whom English is a second language who entered school for the first time after reaching their twelfth birthday, and who have not reached twenty-two years of age on or before August 1 of the school year, for the first seven (7) months (or equivalent period) of the school year through March 31 in which state funds are distributed from this appropriation. Preschool and postgraduate students shall not be included in March 31 ADM.

a. School divisions shall take a count of September 30 fall membership and report this information to the Department of Education no later than October 15 of each year.

b. Except as otherwise provided herein, by statute, or by precedent, all appropriations to the Department of Education shall be calculated using March 31 ADM unadjusted for half-day kindergarten programs, estimated at 1,187,484.85 the first year and 1,180,137.15 the second year. March 31 ADM for half-day kindergarten shall be adjusted at 85 percent.

c. Students who are either (i) enrolled in a nonpublic school or (ii) receiving home instruction pursuant to § 22.1-254.1 and who are enrolled in a public school on less than a full-time basis in any mathematics, science, English, history, social science, vocational education, health education or physical education, fine arts or foreign language course, or receiving special education services required by a student's individualized education plan, shall be counted in the funded fall membership and March 31 ADM of the responsible school division. Each course shall be counted as 0.25, up to a cap of 0.5 of a student.

d. Students enrolled in an Individualized Student Alternative Education Program (ISAEP) pursuant to § 22.1-254 E shall be counted in the March 31 Average Daily Membership of the responsible school division. School divisions shall report these students separately in their March 31 reports of Average Daily Membership.

2. "Standards of Quality" - Operations standards for grades kindergarten through 12 as prescribed by the Board of Education subject to revision by the General Assembly.

3.a. "Basic Operation Cost" - The cost per pupil, including provision for the number of instructional personnel required by the Standards of Quality for each school division with a minimum ratio of 51 professional personnel for each 1,000 pupils or proportionate number thereof, in March 31 ADM for the same fiscal year for which the costs are computed, and including provision for driver, gifted, occupational-vocational, and special education, library materials and other teaching materials, teacher sick leave, general administration, division superintendents' salaries, free textbooks (including those for free and reduced price lunch pupils), operation and maintenance of school plant, transportation of pupils, instructional television, professional and staff improvement, remedial work, fixed charges and other costs in programs not funded by other state and/or federal aid.

4.a. "Composite Index of Local Ability-to-Pay" - An index figure computed for each locality. The composite index is the sum of 2/3 of the index of wealth per pupil in unadjusted March 31 ADM reported for the first seven (7) months of the 2023-2024 school year and 1/3 of the index of wealth per capita (population estimates for 2023 as determined by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service of the University of Virginia) multiplied by the local nominal share of the costs of the Standards of Quality of 0.45 in each year. The indices of wealth are determined by combining the following constituent index elements with the indicated weighting: (1) true values of real estate and public service corporations as reported by the State Department of Taxation for the calendar year 2023 - 50 percent; (2) adjusted gross income for the calendar year 2023 as reported by the State Department of Taxation - 40 percent; (3) the sales for the calendar year 2023 which are subject to the state general sales and use tax, as reported by the State Department of Taxation - 10 percent. Each constituent index element for a locality is its sum per March 31 ADM, or per capita, expressed as a percentage of the state average per March 31 ADM, or per capita, for the same element. A locality whose composite index exceeds 0.8000 shall be considered as having an index of 0.8000 for purposes of distributing all payments based on the composite index of local ability-to-pay. Each constituent index element for a locality used to determine the composite index of local ability-to-pay for the

current biennium shall be the latest available data for the specified official base year provided to the Department of Education by the responsible source agencies no later than November 15, 2025.

b. For any locality whose total calendar year 2023 Virginia Adjusted Gross Income is comprised of at least 3 percent or more by nonresidents of Virginia, such nonresident income shall be excluded in computing the composite index of ability-to-pay. The Department of Education shall compute the composite index for such localities by using adjusted gross income data which exclude nonresident income, but shall not adjust the composite index of any other localities. The Department of Taxation shall furnish to the Department of Education such data as are necessary to implement this provision.

c.1) Notwithstanding the funding provisions in § 22.1-25 D, Code of Virginia, additional state funding for future consolidations shall be as set forth in future Appropriation Acts.

2) In the case of the consolidation of Bedford County and Bedford City school divisions, the fifteen year period for the application of a new composite shall apply beginning with the fiscal year that starts on July 1, 2013. The composite index established by the Board of Education shall equal the lowest composite index that was in effect prior to July 1, 2013, of any individual localities involved in such consolidation, and this index shall remain in effect for a period of fifteen years, unless a lower composite index is calculated for the combined division through the process for computing an index as set forth above.

3) If the composite index of a consolidated school division is reduced during the course of the fifteen year period to a level that would entitle the school division to a lower interest rate for a Literary Fund loan than it received when the loan was originally released, the Board of Education shall reduce the interest rate of such loan for the remainder of the period of the loan. Such reduction shall be based on the interest rate that would apply at the time of such adjustment. This rate shall remain in effect for the duration of the loan and shall apply only to those years remaining to be paid.

d. If a local school division determines that a substantial error exists in a constituent index element used to calculate the local composite index for the upcoming biennium, the division shall notify the Department of Education no later than December 31 of the year that the Department of Education published the local composite index values for the upcoming biennium. If the Department of Education confirms that a substantial error exists in a constituent index element, the Department of Education will make adjustments in funding only in the division where the error occurred. The composite index of any other locality shall not be changed as a result of the adjustment. No adjustment during the biennium will be made as a result of updating of data used in a constituent index element.

e. In the event that any school division consolidates two or more small schools, the division shall continue to receive Standards of Quality funding and provide for the required local expenditure for a period of five years as if the schools had not been consolidated. Small schools are defined as any elementary, middle, or high school with enrollment below 200, 300 and 400 students, respectively.

5. "Required Local Expenditure for the Standards of Quality" - The locality's share based on the composite index of local ability-to-pay of the cost required by all the Standards of Quality minus its estimated revenues from the state sales and use tax dedicated to public education, and those sales tax revenues transferred to the general fund from the Public Education Standards of Quality/Local Real Estate Property Tax Relief Fund and appropriated in this Item, both of which are returned on the basis of the latest yearly estimate of school age population provided by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, as specified in this Item, collected by the Department of Education and distributed to school divisions in the fiscal year in which the school year begins.

6. "Required Local Match" - The locality's required share of program cost based on the composite index of local ability-to-pay for all Lottery and Incentive programs, where required, in which the school division has elected to participate in a fiscal year.

7. "Planning District Eight" - The nine localities which comprise Planning District Eight are Arlington County, Fairfax County, Loudoun County, Prince William County, Alexandria City, Fairfax City, Falls Church City, Manassas City, and Manassas Park City.

8. "State Share of the Standards of Quality" - The state share of the Standards of Quality (SOQ) shall be equal to the total funded SOQ cost for a school division less the school division's estimated revenues from the state sales and use tax dedicated to public education based on the latest yearly estimate of school age population provided by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, adjusted for the state's share of the composite index of local ability to pay.

9. Entitlements under this Item that use school-level or division-level Free Lunch eligibility percentages to determine the entitlement amounts are based on the most recent data available as of the biennial rebenchmarking calculations made for the current biennium. For schools that participate in the Community Eligibility Provision program, such entitlements are based on the most recent Free Lunch eligibility data available prior to that school's enrollment in the Community Eligibility Provision program.

10. In the event that the general fund appropriations in this Item are not sufficient to meet the entitlements payable to school divisions pursuant to the provisions of this Item, the Department of Education is authorized to transfer any available general fund funds between these Items to address such insufficiencies. If the total general fund appropriations after such transfers remain insufficient to meet the entitlements of any program funded with general fund dollars, the Department of Education is authorized to prorate such shortfall proportionately across all of the school divisions participating in any program where such shortfall occurred.

11. The Department of Education is directed to apply a cap on inflation rates in the same manner prescribed in § 51.1-166.B, Code of Virginia, when updating funding to school divisions during the biennial rebenchmarking process.

12. Notwithstanding any other provision in statute or in this Item, the Department of Education is directed to combine the end-of-year Average Daily Membership (ADM) for those school divisions who have partnered together as a fiscal agent division and a contractual division for the purposes of calculating prevailing costs included in the Standards of Quality (SOQ).

13. Notwithstanding any other provision in statute or in this Item, the Department of Education is directed to include zeroes in the linear weighted average calculation of support non-personal costs for the purpose of calculating prevailing costs included in the Standards of Quality (SOQ).

14. Notwithstanding any other provision in statute or in this Item, the Department of Education is directed to eliminate the corresponding and appropriate object code(s) related to reported travel expenditures included the linear weighted average non-personal cost calculations for the purpose of calculating prevailing costs included in the Standards of Quality (SOQ).

15. Notwithstanding any other provision in statute or in this Item, the Department of Education is directed to eliminate the corresponding and appropriate object code(s) related to reported leases and rental and facility expenditures included the linear weighted average non-personal cost calculations for the purpose of calculating prevailing costs included in the Standards of Quality (SOQ).

16. Notwithstanding any other provision in statute or in this Item, the Department of Education is directed to fund transportation costs using a 15 year replacement schedule, which is the national standard guideline, for school bus replacement schedule for the purpose of calculating funded transportation costs included in the Standards of Quality (SOQ).

17. To provide additional flexibility, notwithstanding the provisions of § 22.1-79.1, Code of Virginia, any school division that was granted a waiver regarding the opening date of the school year for the 2011-2012 school year under the good cause requirements shall continue to be granted a waiver for the 2026-2027 school year and the 2027-2028 school year.

B. General Conditions

1. The Standards of Quality cost in this Item related to fringe benefits shall be limited for instructional staff members to the employer's cost for a number not exceeding the number of instructional positions required by the Standards of Quality for each school division and for their salaries at the statewide prevailing salary levels as printed below.

Instructional Position	First Year Salary	Second Year Salary
Elementary Teachers	$64,762	$64,762
Elementary Assistant Principals	$89,240	$89,240
Elementary Principals	$110,059	$110,059
Secondary Teachers	$68,417	$68,417
Secondary Assistant Principals	$95,663	$95,663
Secondary Principals	$118,441	$118,441
Instructional Aides	$27,513	$27,513

a.1) Payment by the state to a local school division shall be based on the state share of fringe benefit costs of 55 percent of the employer's cost distributed on the basis of the composite index.

2) A locality whose composite index exceeds 0.8000 shall be considered as having an index of 0.8000 for purposes of distributing fringe benefit funds under this provision.

3) The state payment to each school division for retirement, social security, and group life insurance costs for non-instructional personnel is included in and distributed through Basic Aid.

b. Payments to school divisions from this Item shall be calculated using March 31 Average Daily Membership adjusted for half-day kindergarten programs.

c. Payments for health insurance fringe benefits are included in and distributed through Basic Aid.

2. Each locality shall offer a school program for all its eligible pupils which is acceptable to the Department of Education as conforming to the Standards of Quality program requirements.

3. In the event the statewide number of pupils in March 31 ADM results in a state share of cost exceeding the general fund appropriation in this Item, the locality's state share of Basic Aid shall be reduced proportionately so that this general fund appropriation will not be exceeded. In addition, the required local share of Basic Aid shall also be reduced proportionately to the reduction in the state's share.

4. The Department of Education shall make equitable adjustments in the computation of indices of wealth and in other state-funded accounts for localities affected by annexation, unless a court of competent jurisdiction makes such adjustments. However, only the indices of wealth and other state-funded accounts of localities party to the annexation will be adjusted.

5. In the event that the actual revenues from the state sales and use tax dedicated to public education and those sales tax revenues transferred to the general fund from the Public Education Standards of Quality/Local Real Estate Property Tax Relief Fund and appropriated in this Item (both of which are returned on the basis of the latest yearly estimate of school age population provided by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service) for sales in the fiscal year in which the school year begins are different from the number estimated as the basis for this appropriation, the estimated state sales and use tax revenues shall not be adjusted.

6. This appropriation shall be apportioned to the public schools with guidelines established by the Department of Education consistent with legislative intent as expressed in this act.

7.a. Appropriations of state funds in this Item include the number of positions required by the Standards of Quality. This Item includes a minimum of 51 professional instructional positions and aide positions (C 5); Education of the Gifted, 1.0 professional instructional position (C 6); Occupational-Vocational Education Payments and Special Education Payments; a minimum of 6.0 professional instructional positions and aide positions (C 7 and C 8) for each 1,000 pupils in March 31 ADM each year in support of the current Standards of Quality.

b. No actions provided in this section signify any intent of the General Assembly to mandate an increase in the number of instructional personnel per 1,000 students above the numbers explicitly stated in the preceding paragraph.

c. Appropriations in this Item include programs supported in part by transfers to the general fund from the Public Education Standards of Quality/Local Real Estate Property Tax Relief Fund pursuant to Part 3 of this Act. These transfers combined together with other appropriations from the general fund in this Item funds the state's share of the following revisions to the Standards of Quality pursuant to Chapters 939 &955 of the Acts of Assembly of 2004: five elementary resource teachers per 1,000 students; one support technology position per 1,000 students; one instructional technology position per 1,000 students; and a full daily planning period for teachers at the middle and high school levels in order to relieve the financial pressure these education programs place on local real estate taxes.

d. To provide flexibility, school divisions may use the state and local funds for instructional technology resource teachers required by the Standards of Quality to employ a data coordinator position, an instructional technology resource teacher position, or a data coordinator/instructional resource teacher blended position. The data coordinator position is intended to serve as a resource to principals and classroom teachers in the area of data analysis and interpretation for instructional and school improvement purposes, as well as for overall data management and administration of state assessments. School divisions using these SOQ funds in this manner shall only employ instructional personnel licensed by the Board of Education.

e. To provide flexibility in the provision of reading intervention services, school divisions may use the state Early Reading Intervention initiative funding provided from the Lottery Proceeds Fund and the required local matching funds to employ reading specialists to provide the required reading intervention services. School divisions using the Early Reading Intervention Initiative funds in this manner shall only employ instructional personnel licensed by the Board of Education.

f. To provide flexibility in the provision of mathematics intervention services, school divisions may use the state Standards of Learning Algebra Readiness initiative funding provided from the Lottery Proceeds Fund and the required local matching funds to employ mathematics teacher specialists to provide the required mathematics intervention services. School divisions using the Standards of Learning Algebra Readiness initiative funding in this manner shall only employ instructional personnel licensed by the Board of Education.

g. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection G of § 22.1-253.13:2, Code of Virginia, school boards may employ

other staff such as reading coaches or other instructional staff who are working towards obtaining the training and licensure requirements necessary to fulfill the reading specialist staffing standards.

8.a.1) Pursuant to § 22.1-97, Code of Virginia, the Department of Education is required to make calculations at the start of the school year to ensure that school divisions have appropriated adequate funds to support their estimated required local expenditure for the corresponding state fiscal year. In an effort to reduce the administrative burden on school divisions resulting from state data collections, such as the one needed to make the aforementioned calculations, the requirements of § 22.1-97, Code of Virginia, pertaining to the adequacy of estimated required local expenditures, shall be satisfied by signed certification by each division superintendent at the beginning of each school year that sufficient local funds have been budgeted to meet all state required local effort and required local match amounts. This provision shall only apply to calculations required of the Department of Education related to estimated required local expenditures and shall not pertain to the calculations associated with actual required local expenditures after the close of the school year.

2) The Department of Education shall also make calculations after the close of the school year to verify that the required local effort level, based on actual March 31 Average Daily Membership, was met. Pursuant to § 22.1-97, Code of Virginia, the Department of Education shall report annually, no later than the first day of the General Assembly session, to the House Committees on Education and Appropriations and the Senate Committees on Finance and Appropriations and Education and Health, the results of such calculations made after the close of the school year and the degree to which each school division has met, failed to meet, or surpassed its required local expenditure. The Department of Education shall specify the calculations to determine if a school division has expended its required local expenditure for the Standards of Quality. This calculation may include but is not limited to the following calculations:

b. The total expenditures for operation, defined as total expenditures less all capital outlays, expenditures for debt service, facilities, non-regular day school programs (such as adult education, preschool, and non-local education programs), and any transfers to regional programs will be calculated.

c. The following state funds will be deducted from the amount calculated in paragraph a. above: revenues from the state sales and use tax (returned on the basis of the latest yearly estimate of school age population provided by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, as specified in this Item) for sales in the fiscal year in which the school year begins; total receipts from state funds (except state funds for non-regular day school programs and state funds used for capital or debt service purposes); and the state share of any balances carried forward from the previous fiscal year. Any qualifying state funds that remain unspent at the end of the fiscal year will be added to the amount calculated in paragraph a. above.

d. Federal funds, and any federal funds carried forward from the previous fiscal year, will also be deducted from the amount calculated in paragraph a. above. Any federal funds that remain unspent at the end of the fiscal year and any capital expenditures paid from federal funds will be added to the amount calculated in paragraph a. above.

e. Tuition receipts, receipts from payments from other cities or counties, and fund transfers will also be deducted from the amount calculated in paragraph a, then

f. The final amount calculated as described above must be equal to or greater than the required local expenditure defined in paragraph A. 5.

g. The Department of Education shall collect the data necessary to perform the calculations of required local expenditure as required by this section.

h. A locality whose expenditure in fact exceeds the required amount from local funds may not reduce its expenditures unless it first complies with all of the Standards of Quality.

9.a. Any required local matching funds which a locality, as of the end of a school year, has not expended, pursuant to this Item, for the Standards of Quality shall be paid by the locality into the general fund of the state treasury. Such payments shall be made not later than the end of the school year following that in which the under expenditure occurs.

b. Whenever the Department of Education has recovered funds as defined in the preceding paragraph a., the Secretary of Education is authorized to repay to the locality affected by that action, seventy-five percent (75%) of those funds upon his determination that:

1) The local school board agrees to include the funds in its June 30 ending balance for the year following that in which the under expenditure occurs;

2) The local governing body agrees to reappropriate the funds as a supplemental appropriation to the approved budget for the second year following that in which the under expenditure occurs, in an appropriate category as requested by the local school board, for the direct benefit of the students;

3) The local school board agrees to expend these funds, over and above the funds required to meet the required local expenditure for the second year following that in which the under expenditure occurs, for a special project, the details of which must be furnished to the Department of Education for review and approval;

4) The local school board agrees to submit quarterly reports to the Department of Education on the use of funds provided through this project award; and

5) The local governing body and the local school board agree that the project award will be cancelled and the funds withdrawn if the above conditions have not been met as of June 30 of the second year following that in which the under expenditure occurs.

c. There is hereby appropriated, for the purposes of the foregoing repayment, a sum sufficient, not to exceed 75 percent of the funds deposited in the general fund pursuant to the preceding paragraph a.

10. The Department of Education shall specify the manner for collecting the required information and the method for determining if a school division has expended the local funds required to support the actual local match based on all Lottery and Incentive programs in which the school division has elected to participate. Unless specifically stated otherwise in this Item, school divisions electing to participate in any Lottery or Incentive program that requires a local funding match in order to receive state funding, shall certify to the Department of Education its intent to participate in each program by July 1 each fiscal year in a manner prescribed by the Department of Education. As part of this certification process, each division superintendent must also certify that adequate local funds have been appropriated, above the required local effort for the Standards of Quality, to support the projected required local match based on the Lottery and Incentive programs in which the school division has elected to participate. State funding for such program(s) shall not be made until such time that the school division can certify that sufficient local funding has been appropriated to meet required local match. The Department of Education shall make calculations after the close of the fiscal year to verify that the required local match was met based on the state funds that were received.

11. Any sum of local matching funds for Lottery and Incentive program which a locality has not expended as of the end of a fiscal year in support of the required local match pursuant to this Item shall be paid by the locality into the general fund of the state treasury unless the carryover of those unspent funds is specifically permitted by other provisions of this act. Such payments shall be made no later than the end of the school year following that in which the under expenditure occurred.

12. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall provide a report annually, no later than the first day of the General Assembly session, on the status of teacher salaries, by local school division, to the Governor and the Chairs

of the Senate Finance and Appropriations and House Appropriations Committees. In addition to information on average salaries by school division and statewide comparisons with other states, the report shall also include information on starting salaries by school division and average teacher salaries by school.

13. All state and local matching funds required by the programs in this Item shall be appropriated to the budget of the local school board.

14. By November 1 of each year, the Department of Planning and Budget, in cooperation with the Department of Education, shall prepare and submit a preliminary forecast of Standards of Quality expenditures, based upon the most current data available, to the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees. In odd-numbered years, the forecast for the current and subsequent two fiscal years shall be provided. In even-numbered years, the forecast for the current and subsequent fiscal year shall be provided. The forecast shall detail the projected March 31 Average Daily Membership and the resulting impact on the education budget.

15. Except as otherwise provided in this act, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall provide guidelines for the distribution and expenditure of general fund appropriations and such additional federal, private and other funds as may be made available to aid in the establishment and maintenance of the public schools.

16. At the Department of Education's option, fees for audio-visual services may be deducted from state Basic Aid payments for individual local school divisions.

17. For distributions not otherwise specified, the Department of Education, at its option, may use prior year data to calculate actual disbursements to individual localities.

18. Payments for accounts related to the Standards of Quality made to localities for public education from the general fund, as provided herein, shall be payable in twenty-four semi-monthly installments at the middle and end of each month.

19. Notwithstanding § 58.1-638 D., Code of Virginia, and other language in this Item, the Department of Education shall, for purposes of calculating the state and local shares of the Standards of Quality, apportion state sales and use tax dedicated to public education and those sales tax revenues transferred to the general fund from the Public Education Standards of Quality/ Local Real Estate Property Tax Relief Fund in the first year based on the July 1, 2024, estimate of school age population provided by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service and, in the second year, based on the July 1, 2025, estimate of school age population provided by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service.

Notwithstanding § 58.1-638 D., Code of Virginia, and other language in this Item, the State Comptroller shall distribute the state sales and use tax revenues dedicated to public education and those sales tax revenues transferred to the general fund from the Public Education Standards of Quality/ Local Real Estate Property Tax Relief Fund in the first year based on the July 1, 2024, estimate of school age population provided by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service and, in the second year, based on the July 1, 2025, estimate of school age population provided by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service.

20. The school divisions within the Tobacco Region, as defined by the Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission, shall jointly explore ways to maximize their collective expenditure reimbursement totals for all eligible E-Rate funding.

21. This Item includes appropriations totaling an estimated $895,725,168 the first year and $877,725,168 the second year from the revenues deposited to the Lottery Proceeds Fund. These amounts are appropriated for distribution to counties, cities, and towns to support public education programs pursuant to Article X, Section 7-A Constitution of Virginia. Any county, city, or town which accepts a distribution from this fund shall provide its portion of the cost of maintaining an educational program meeting the Standards of Quality pursuant to Section 2

of Article VIII of the Constitution without the use of distributions from the fund. Of the amounts in the first year, $10,000,000 are residual profits from fiscal year 2026.

22. For reporting purposes, the Department of Education shall include Lottery Proceeds Funds as state funds.

23.a. Any locality that has met its required local effort for the Standards of Quality accounts for FY 2027 and that has met its required local match for incentive or Lottery-funded programs in which the locality elected to participate in FY 2027 may carry over into FY 2028 any remaining state Direct Aid to Public Education fund balances available to help minimize any FY 2028 revenue adjustments that may occur in state funding to that locality. Localities electing to carry forward such unspent state funds must appropriate the funds to the school division for expenditure in FY 2028.

b. Any locality that has met its required local effort for the Standards of Quality accounts for FY 2028 and that has met its required local match for incentive or Lottery-funded programs in which the locality elected to participate in FY 2028 may carry over into FY 2029 any remaining state Direct Aid to Public Education fund balances available to help minimize any FY 2029 revenue adjustments that may occur in state funding to that locality. Localities electing to carry forward such unspent state funds must appropriate the funds to the school division for expenditure in FY 2029.

24. Localities are encouraged to allow school boards to carry over any unspent local allocations into the next fiscal year. Localities are also encouraged to provide increased flexibility to school boards by appropriating state and local funds for public education in a lump sum.

25. The Department of Education shall include in the annual School Performance Report Card for school divisions the percentage of each division's annual operating budget allocated to instructional costs. For this report, the Department of Education shall establish a methodology for allocating each school division's expenditures to instructional and non-instructional costs in a manner that is consistent with the funding of the Standards of Quality as approved by the General Assembly.

26. It is the intent of the General Assembly that all school divisions annually provide their employees, upon request, with a user-friendly statement of total compensation, including contract duration if less than 12 months.

27. The Department of Education, in collaboration with the Virginia Community College System, will ensure that the same policies regarding the cost for dual enrollment courses held at a community college, are consistently applied to public school students and home-schooled students alike. These policies will clearly address the school division contributions and any student charges for dual enrollment courses, and will ensure that public school students and home-school students are treated in the same manner.

28. Each school division shall report each year to the Department of Education the individual uses for the prior year of the following funds prescribed by this item: (i) At-Risk Add-On and (ii) Early Reading Intervention. The Department shall prescribe the format and timeline required for the reporting of such information, which shall include, permitted categories of spending, personnel, both state and local contributions, and to the extent possible, the individual schools which these funds were expended. The Department shall compile and submit this information to the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees no later than the first day of the General Assembly session.

29. Multidivision online providers, as defined in § 22.1-212.23, Code of Virginia, shall provide certain data as prescribed by the Department of Education related to students enrolled through a contract between such a provider and a school division, including such students who do not reside in the school division that is party to the contract. Such data shall include, but is not limited to, enrollment, which shall be disaggregated by serving school, demographics, attendance, achievement, and achievement gaps, and be transmitted in a format prescribed by the Department. The Department shall report such data annually through the School Quality Profiles in a manner that

clearly disaggregates and communicates school quality information related to (i) the students that do not reside in the school division and are served through the contract, and (ii) all other students.

30. Each school division shall report to the Department of Education information on the use of funds appropriated in fiscal year 2024 for the Flexible Funding Supplement and on the use of pass-through federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds used since 2020. Such reporting shall specify amounts obligated and expensed based on reporting categories as prescribed by the Department of Education. School divisions also shall report how funds address performance gains or losses related to reading and mathematics and support preparation and implementation of the Virginia Literacy Act. The Department of Education shall compile this information and submit it to the Governor and the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee no later than October 1, 2024, 2025, and 2026.

31. a. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection A of § 22.1-349.1, Code of Virginia, for the purpose of this Item and the College Partnership Laboratory School Fund, a "college partnership laboratory school" means a public, nonsectarian, nonreligious school in the Commonwealth established by a baccalaureate public institution of higher education.

b. Institutions not eligible for funding under paragraph B.31.a. of this Item may partner with a public baccalaureate institution of higher education in Virginia to operate a college partnership laboratory school if they wish to access funding from the College Partnership Laboratory School Fund. The public baccalaureate institution must have an approved college partnership laboratory school application to serve as the fiscal agent and partner by June 30, 2024. The Department of Education shall require resubmission of contracts to meet the fiscal agent and partnership requirements of this paragraph. The Department shall report to the Chairs of the Senate Finance and Appropriations and House Appropriations Committees of any submissions and prior contracts.

c. College partnership laboratory schools shall (i) reach financial sustainability by the end of their initial approval period as defined in § 22.1-349.8, Code of Virginia, such that no additional state funding other than state funds received by a school division in support of Direct Aid for Public Education is required to support ongoing operations after the first contract renewal, and (ii) submit supporting information to the Board of Education demonstrating progress toward financial sustainability. The Board of Education shall report annually by November 1 to the Governor and Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees on progress of college laboratory schools in meeting this financial sustainability requirement.

32. In accordance with § 22.1-253.13:5 and § 22.1-253.13:1, Code of Virginia, a local school board shall ensure any public charter school that serves students in grades kindergarten through eight with which the local school board has a charter contract pursuant to § 22.1-212.7, Code of Virginia, is provided resources to meet requirements related to reading intervention and literacy instruction and professional development.

C. Apportionment

1. Subject to the conditions stated in this paragraph and in paragraph B of this Item, each locality shall receive sums as listed above within this program for the basic operation cost and payments in addition to that cost. The apportionment herein directed shall be inclusive of, and without further payment by reason of, state funds for library and other teaching materials.

2. School Employee Retirement Contributions

a. This Item provides funds to each local school board for the state share of the employer's retirement cost incurred by it, on behalf of instructional and support personnel, for subsequent transfer to the retirement allowance account as provided by Title 51.1, Chapter 1, Code of Virginia.

b. Notwithstanding § 51.1-1401, Code of Virginia, the Commonwealth shall provide payments for only the state

share of the Standards of Quality fringe benefit cost of the retiree health care credit. This Item includes payments in both years based on the state share of fringe benefit costs of 55 percent of the employer's cost on funded Standards of Quality instructional and support positions, distributed based on the composite index of the local ability-to-pay.

c. The appropriation for school employee retirement contributions includes payments from funds derived from the principal of the Literary Fund in accordance with Article VIII, Section 8, of the Constitution of Virginia. The amounts set aside from the Literary Fund for this purpose shall not exceed $360,000,000 the first year and $275,000,000 the second year. Of these amounts, $100,000,000 the second year shall be considered one-time.

3. School Employee Social Security Contributions

This Item provides funds to each local school board for the state share of the employer's Social Security cost incurred by it, on behalf of the instructional personnel for subsequent transfer to the Contribution Fund pursuant to Title 51.1, Chapter 7, Code of Virginia.

4. School Employee Insurance Contributions

This Item provides funds to each local school board for the state share of the employer's Group Life Insurance cost incurred by it on behalf of instructional personnel who participate in group insurance under the provisions of Title 51.1, Chapter 5, Code of Virginia.

5. Basic Aid Payments

a.1) A state share of the Basic Operation Cost, which cost per pupil in March 31 ADM is established individually for each local school division based on the number of instructional personnel required by the Standards of Quality and the statewide prevailing salary levels (adjusted in Planning District Eight for the cost of competing) as well as recognized support costs calculated on a prevailing basis for an estimated March 31 ADM.

2) This appropriation includes funding to recognize the common labor market in the Washington-Baltimore-Northern Virginia, DC-MD-VA-WV Combined Statistical Area. Standards of Quality salary payments for instructional and support positions in school divisions of the localities set out below have been adjusted for the equivalent portion of the Cost of Competing Adjustment (COCA) rates that are paid to local school divisions in Planning District Eight. For the counties of Stafford, Fauquier, Spotsylvania, Clarke, Warren, Frederick, and Culpeper and the Cities of Fredericksburg and Winchester, the SOQ payments for instructional and support positions have been increased by 25 percent each year of the COCA rates paid to school divisions in Planning District Eight.

The support COCA rate is 18.0 percent.

b. The state share for a locality shall be equal to the Basic Operation Cost for that locality less the locality's estimated revenues from the state sales and use tax and the Supplemental General Fund Payment In Lieu of Sales Tax on Food and Personal Hygiene Products (returned on the basis of the latest yearly estimate of school age population provided by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, as specified in this Item), in the fiscal year in which the school year begins and less the required local expenditure.

c. For the purpose of this paragraph, the Department of Taxation's fiscal year sales and use tax estimates are as cited in this Item.

d. 1) In accordance with the provisions of § 37.2-713, Code of Virginia, the Department of Education shall deduct the locality's share for the education of handicapped pupils residing in institutions within the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services from the locality's Basic Aid payments.

2) The amounts deducted from Basic Aid for the education of intellectually disabled persons shall be transferred to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services in support of the cost of educating such persons; the amount deducted from Basic Aid for the education of emotionally disturbed persons shall be used to cover extraordinary expenses incurred in the education of such persons. The Department of Education shall establish guidelines to implement these provisions and shall provide for the periodic transfer of sums due from each local school division to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and for Special Education categorical payments. The amount of the actual transfers will be based on data accumulated during the prior school year.

e. 1) The apportionment to localities of all driver education revenues received during the school year shall be made as an undesignated component of the state share of Basic Aid in accordance with the provisions of this Item. Only school divisions complying with the standardized program established by the Board of Education shall be entitled to participate in the distribution of state funds appropriated for driver education. The Department of Education will deduct a designated amount per pupil from a school division's Basic Aid payment when the school division is not in compliance with § 22.1-205 C, Code of Virginia. Such amount will be computed by dividing the current appropriation for the Driver Education Fund by actual March 31 ADM.

2) Local school boards may charge a per pupil fee for behind-the-wheel driver education provided, however, that the fee charged plus the per pupil basic aid reimbursement for driver education shall not exceed the actual average per pupil cost. Such fees shall not be cause for a pro rata reduction in Basic Aid payments to school divisions.

f. Textbooks

1) The appropriation in this Item includes $104,933,124 the first year and $104,255,549 the second year from the general fund as the state's share of the cost of textbooks based on a per pupil amount of $159.41 the first year and $159.41 the second year. A school division shall appropriate these funds for textbooks or any other public education instructional expenditure by the school division. The state's distributions for textbooks shall be based on adjusted March 31 ADM. These funds shall be matched by the local government, based on the composite index of local ability-to-pay.

2) School divisions shall provide free textbooks to all students.

3) School divisions may use a portion of this funding to purchase Standards of Learning instructional materials. School divisions may also use these funds to purchase electronic textbooks or other electronic media resources integral to the curriculum and classroom instruction and the technical equipment required to read and access the electronic textbooks and electronic curriculum materials.

4) Any funds provided to school divisions for textbook costs that are unexpended as of June 30, 2027, or June 30, 2028, shall be carried on the books of the locality to be appropriated to the school division the following year to be used for same purpose. School divisions are permitted to carry forward any remaining balance of textbook funds until the funds are expensed for a qualifying purpose.

g. The one-cent state sales and use tax earmarked for education and the sales tax revenues transferred to the general fund from the Public Education Standards of Quality/Local Real Estate Property Tax Relief Fund and appropriated in this Item which are distributed to localities on the basis of the latest yearly estimate of school age population provided by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service as specified in this Item shall be reflected in each locality's annual budget for educational purposes as a separate revenue source for the current fiscal year.

h. The appropriation for the Standards of Quality for Public Education (SOQ) includes amounts estimated at $627,900,000 the first year and $644,000,000 the second year from the amounts transferred to the general fund from the Public Education Standards of Quality/Local Real Estate Property Tax Relief Fund pursuant to Part 3 of

this act which are derived from the 0.375 cent increase in the state sales and use tax levied pursuant to § 58.1-638, Code of Virginia. These additional funds are provided to local school divisions and local governments in order to relieve the financial pressure education programs place on local real estate taxes.

i. From the total amounts in paragraph h. above, an amount estimated at $418,600,000 the first year and $429,333,000 the second year (approximately 1/4 cent of sales and use tax) is appropriated to support a portion of the cost of the state's share of the following revisions to the Standards of Quality pursuant to Chapters 939 & 955 of the Acts of Assembly of 2004: five elementary resource teachers per 1,000 students; one support and one instructional technology position per 1,000 students; a full daily planning period for teachers at the middle and high school levels in order to relieve the pressure on local real estate taxes and shall be taken into account by the governing body of the county, city, or town in setting real estate tax rates.

j. From the total amounts in paragraph h. above, an amount estimated at $209,300,000 the first year and $214,667,000 the second year (approximately 1/8 cent of sales and use tax) is appropriated in this Item to distribute the remainder of the revenues collected and deposited into the Public Education Standards of Quality/Local Real Estate Property Tax Relief Fund on the basis of the latest yearly estimate of school age population provided by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service as specified in this Item.

k. For the purposes of funding certain support positions in Basic Aid, a funding ratio methodology is used based upon 27.89 support positions per 1,000 ADM to funded SOQ instructional positions in the first year and in the second year. Such methodology shall not apply to the following SOQ support positions: division superintendent, school board members, pupil transportation positions, or specialized student support positions established in Chapter 454, 2021 Acts of Assembly, Special Session I.

6. Education of the Gifted Payments

a. An additional payment shall be disbursed by the Department of Education to local school divisions to support the state share of one full-time equivalent instructional position per 1,000 students in adjusted March 31 ADM.

b. Local school divisions are required to spend, as part of the required local expenditure for the Standards of Quality the established per pupil cost for gifted education (state and local share) on approved programs for the gifted.

7. Occupational-Vocational Education Payments

a. An additional payment shall be disbursed by the Department of Education to the local school divisions to support the state share of the number of Vocational Education instructors required by the Standards of Quality. These funds shall be disbursed on the same basis as the payment is calculated.

b. An amount estimated at $177,826,756 the first year and $177,472,848 the second year from the general fund included in Basic Aid Payments relates to vocational education programs in support of the Standards of Quality.

8. Special Education Payments

a. An additional payment shall be disbursed by the Department of Education to the local school divisions to support the state share of the number of Special Education instructors required by the Standards of Quality. These funds shall be disbursed on the same basis as the payment is calculated.

b. Out of the amounts for special education payments, general fund support is provided to fund the caseload standards for speech pathologists at 68 students for each year of the biennium.

c. In addition to the funds provided to support the state share of Special Education instructors in paragraphs a and

b, an add-on payment shall be provided to support each special education student, based on a 9.25 percent add-on to basic aid per service Level I students and a 17.5 percent add-on to basic aid for Service Level II students, as defined in 8VAC20-81-10.

9. At Risk Add-On

a. Out of this appropriation, $869,327,557 the first year and $816,632,269 the second year from the general fund and $138,663,607 the first year and $184,932,099 the second year from the Lottery Proceeds Fund is provided to distribute the state share of funds for the At-Risk Program. These payments shall be distributed based on the estimated number of At-Risk students, based on (1) the most recent three-year average Identified Student Percentage, applying a 1.25 multiplier factor, and (2) including one quarter of students identified as English language learners.

b. The At-Risk Program shall provide each school division the state share of an 11.0 percent basic-aid add-on per estimated At-Risk student. In addition, the program shall provide each school division the state share of a payment equal to a 0.0 to 37.85 percent basic-aid add-on per estimated At-Risk student, with each school division's add-on percentage determined based upon the school division's concentration of At-Risk students relative to all other school divisions. Funding shall be matched by the local government based on the composite index of local ability-to-pay.

c. These funds may be used for the purposes established in general law, including supporting programs and services for students who are educationally at risk, including prevention, intervention, or remediation activities required pursuant to Standard 1 (§ 22.1-253.13:1); teacher recruitment programs and incentives; targeted compensation adjustments to assist in recruiting and retaining experienced teachers in high poverty schools; Dropout Prevention; community and school-based truancy officer programs; Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID); Project Discovery; programs for English language learners; the hiring of additional school counselors, testing coordinators, and licensed behavior analysts; programs relating to increasing the success of disadvantaged students in completing a high school degree and providing opportunities to encourage further education and training; programs designed to reduce chronic absenteeism; and initiatives to support both the physical and mental health of students in public schools, including the hiring of licensed practical nurses, registered nurses, and advanced practice registered nurses.

d. If the Board of Education has required a local school board to submit a corrective action plan pursuant to § 22.1-253.13:3, Code of Virginia, either for the school division pursuant to a division level review, or for any schools within its division that have been designated as not meeting the standards as approved by the Board of Education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall determine and report to the Board of Education whether each such local school board has met its obligation to develop and submit such corrective action plan(s) and is making adequate and timely progress in implementing the plan(s). Additionally, if an academic or other review process undertaken pursuant to § 22.1-253.13:3, Code of Virginia, has identified actions for a local school board to implement, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall determine and report to the Board of Education whether the local school board has implemented required actions. If the Superintendent certifies that a local school board has failed or refused to meet any of those obligations as referenced in a memorandum of understanding between the local school board and the Board of Education, the Board of Education shall withhold payment of some or all At-Risk Add-On funds otherwise allocated to the affected division pursuant to this allocation for the pending fiscal year. In determining the amount of At-Risk Add-On funds to be withheld, the Board of Education shall take into consideration the extent to which such funds have already been expended or contractually obligated. The local school board shall be given an opportunity to correct its failure and, if successful in a timely manner, may have some or all of its At-Risk Add-On funds restored at the Board of Education's discretion.

10. Regional Alternative Education Programs

a. An additional state payment of $10,250,807 the first year and $10,639,052 the second year from the Lottery

Proceeds Fund shall be disbursed for Regional Alternative Education programs. Such programs shall be for the purpose of educating certain expelled students and, as appropriate, students who have received suspensions from public schools and students returned to the community from the Department of Juvenile Justice.

b. Each regional program shall have a small student/staff ratio. Such staff shall include, but not be limited to education, mental health, health, and law enforcement professionals, who will collaborate to provide for the academic, psychological, and social needs of the students. Each program shall be designed to ensure that students make the transition back into the "mainstream" within their local school division.

c.(i) Regional alternative education programs are funded through this Item based on the state's share of the incremental per pupil cost for providing such programs. This incremental per pupil payment shall be adjusted for the composite index of local ability-to-pay of the school division that counts such students attending such program in its March 31 Average Daily Membership. It is the intent of the General Assembly that this incremental per pupil amount be in addition to the basic aid per pupil funding provided to the affected school division for such students. Therefore, local school divisions are encouraged to provide the appropriate portion of the basic aid per pupil funding to the regional programs for students attending these programs, adjusted for costs incurred by the school division for transportation, administration, and any portion of the school day or school year that the student does not attend such program.

(ii) In the event a school division does not use all of the student slots it is allocated under this program, the unused slots may be reallocated or transferred to another school division.

(a) A school division must request from the Department of Education the availability and possible use of any unused student slots. If any unused slots are available and if the requesting school division chooses to utilize any of the unused slots, the requesting school division shall only receive the state's share of tuition for the unused slot that was allocated in this Item for the originally designated school division.

(b) However, no requesting school division shall receive more tuition funding from the state for any requested unused slot than what would have been the calculated amount for the requesting school division had the unused slot been allocated to the requesting school division in the original budget. Furthermore, the requesting school division shall pay for any remaining tuition payment necessary for using a previously unused slot.

(c) The Department of Education shall provide assistance for the state share of the incremental cost of Regional Alternative Education program operations based on the composite index of local ability-to-pay.

d. Out of the appropriation included in paragraph C.38. of this item, $765,060 the first year and $1,560,466 the second year from the Lottery Proceeds Fund is provided for a compensation supplement payment equal to 4.0 percent of base pay on July 1, 2026, and 4.0 percent of base pay on July 1, 2027, for Regional Alternative Education Program instructional and support positions.

e. In the second year, the Department of Education shall conduct a biennial application process to determine the slot allocation of the regional alternative education program for the subsequent biennium. Each school division, or the fiscal agent for each regional program, shall apply for the desired number of student slots from the statewide total number of slots funded in the state formula. The Department of Education shall take this desired number of slots into account when determining the approved number of slots. The approved number of slots shall be set for both years of the biennium. The Department of Education shall prorate initial application requests if the initial application demand for slots exceeds the number of slots available. In each fiscal year, the Department of Education shall reallocate any unused student slots as prescribed in this item.

11. Remedial Summer School

a. This appropriation includes $30,317,609 the first year and $30,783,331 the second year from the general fund for

the state's share of Remedial Summer School Programs. These funds are available to school divisions for the operation of programs designed to remediate students who are required to attend such programs during a summer school session or during an intersession in the case of year-round schools. These funds may be used in conjunction with other sources of state funding for remediation or intervention. School divisions shall have maximum flexibility with respect to the use of these funds and the types of remediation programs offered; however, in exercising this flexibility, students attending these programs shall not be charged tuition and no high school credit may be awarded to students who participate in this program.

b. For school divisions charging students tuition for summer high school credit courses, consideration shall be given to students from households with extenuating financial circumstances who are repeating a class in order to graduate.

12. K-3 Primary Class Size Reduction Payments

a. An additional payment estimated at $173,342,279 the first year and $172,013,813 the second year from the Lottery Proceeds Fund shall be disbursed by the Department of Education as an incentive for reducing class sizes in the primary grades.

b. The Department of Education shall calculate the payment based on the incremental cost of providing the lower class sizes based on the lower of the division average per pupil cost of all divisions or the actual division per pupil cost.

c. Localities are required to provide a match for these funds based on the composite index of local ability-to-pay.

d. By October 15 of each year school divisions must provide data to the Department of Education that each participating school has a September 30 pupil/teacher ratio in grades K through 3 that meet the following criteria:

Qualifying School Percentage of Students Approved Eligible for Free Lunch, Three-Year Average	**Grades K-3 School Ratio**	**Maximum Individual K-3 Class Size**
30% but less than 45%	19 to 1	24
45% but less than 55%	18 to 1	23
55% but less than 65%	17 to 1	22
65% but less than 70%	16 to 1	21
70% but less than 75%	15 to 1	20
75% or more	14 to 1	19

e. School divisions may elect to have eligible schools participate at a higher ratio, or only in a portion of grades kindergarten through three, with a commensurate reduction of state and required local funds, if local conditions do not permit participation at the established ratio and/or maximum individual class size. In the event that a school division requires additional actions to ensure participation at the established ratio and/or maximum individual class size, such actions must be completed by December 1 of the impacted school year. Special education teachers and instructional aides shall not be counted towards meeting these required pupil/teacher ratios in grades kindergarten through three.

f. The Superintendent of Public Instruction may grant waivers to school divisions for the class size requirement in eligible schools that have only one class in an affected grade level in the school.

13. Literary Fund Subsidy Program Payments

a. The Department of Education and the Virginia Public School Authority (VPSA) shall provide a program of funding for school construction and renovation through the Literary Fund and through VPSA bond sales. Notwithstanding 8VAC-20-100, the program shall be used to provide funds, through Literary Fund loans and subsidies, and through VPSA bond sales, to fund a portion of the projects submitted by localities during the annual open enrollment process, or other critical projects that may receive priority as identified by the Board of Education. Interest rate subsidies will provide school divisions with the present value difference in debt service between a Literary Fund loan and a borrowing through the VPSA. To qualify for an interest rate subsidy, the school division's project must be eligible for a Literary Fund loan and shall be subject to the same restrictions. The VPSA shall work with the Department of Education in selecting those projects to be funded through the interest rate subsidy/bond financing program, so as to ensure the maximum leverage of Literary Fund moneys and a minimum impact on the VPSA Bond Pool.

b. Notwithstanding §§ 22.1-146.1 through 22.1-153, Code of Virginia, and 8VAC-20-100, the Board of Education shall: 1) issue loans from the designated and uncommitted balances of the Literary Fund to the school boards of local school divisions that apply for such loans, authorized by the governing body and the school board, for the purposes of a) erecting, altering, or enlarging school buildings in local school divisions, or b) refinancing or redemption of negotiable notes, bonds, and other evidences of indebtedness or obligations incurred by a locality on behalf of a school division which has an application for a Literary Fund loan for an approved school project pending before the Board of Education; 2) establish a maximum Literary Fund loan amount per project of $25.0 million; 3) in consultation with the Department of Treasury, establish loan interest rates that are benchmarked to a market index on an annual basis for all tiers of localities and provide interest rates that are reasonably below such market index; 4) when funds are designated or available to be offered as loans, maintain an annual open enrollment process for loans, with priority based on the local composite index of ability-to-pay; and 5) offer a loan add-on not to exceed $5.0 million per loan for projects that will result in school consolidation and the net reduction of at least one existing school. The Department of Education, in cooperation with the Department of the Treasury, shall provide an update on Literary Fund loan issuance to the Governor and the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees by October 1 each year. This report shall include detail of: 1) loan applications received in the prior fiscal year by locality, project, and amount; 2) loans issued in the prior fiscal year by locality, project, and amount; 3) the schedule of loan interest rates and the basis for those rates; 4) loans issued for school consolidation projects and the projected impact of those school consolidations; and 5) the impact of loans issued to date on the Literary Fund cash balance, outstanding loan balance, and projected asset base.

c. The Department of Education may offer Literary Fund loans from the uncommitted balances of the Literary Fund after meeting the obligations of the interest rate subsidy sales and the amounts set aside from the Literary Fund for Debt Service Payments for Education Technology and Security Equipment in this Item.

d. 1) In the event that on any scheduled payment date of bonds of the Virginia Public School Authority (VPSA) authorized under the provisions of a bond resolution adopted subsequent to June 30, 1997, issued subsequent to June 30, 1997, and not benefiting from the provisions of either § 22.1-168 (iii), (iv), and (v), Code of Virginia, or § 22.1-168.1, Code of Virginia, the sum of (i) the payments on general obligation school bonds of cities, counties, and towns (localities) paid to the VPSA and (ii) the proceeds derived from the application of the provisions of § 15.2-2659, Code of Virginia, to such bonds of localities, is less than the debt service due on such bonds of the VPSA on such date, there is hereby appropriated to the VPSA, first, from available moneys of the Literary Fund and, second, from the general fund a sum equal to such deficiency.

2) The Commonwealth shall be subrogated to the VPSA to the extent of any such appropriation paid to the VPSA and shall be entitled to enforce the VPSA's remedies with respect to the defaulting locality and to full recovery of the amount of such deficiency, together with interest at the rate of the defaulting locality's bonds.

e. The chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the VPSA shall, on or before November 1 of each year, make and

deliver to the Governor and the Secretary of Finance a certificate setting forth his estimate of total debt service during each fiscal year of the biennium on bonds of the VPSA issued and projected to be issued during such biennium pursuant to the bond resolution referred to in paragraph a above. The Governor's budget submission each year shall include provisions for the payment of debt service pursuant to paragraph 1) above.

14. Educational Technology Payments

a. Any unobligated amounts transferred to the educational technology fund shall be disbursed on a pro rata basis to localities. The additional funds shall be used for technology needs identified in the division's technology plan approved by the Department of Education.

b. The Department of Education shall authorize estimated amounts as indicated in Table 1 from the Literary Fund to provide debt service payments for the education technology grant program conducted through the Virginia Public School Authority in the referenced years.

Table 1

Grant Year	**FY 2027**	**FY 2028**
2022	$12,064,500	
2023	$12,039,500	$12,043,500
2024	$12,224,750	$12,226,750
2025	$12,221,500	$12,218,750
2026	$12,917,035	$12,917,035
2027		$12,917,035

c. It is the intent of the General Assembly to authorize sufficient Literary Fund revenues to pay debt service on the Virginia Public School Authority bonds or notes authorized for education technology grant programs. In developing the proposed 2028-2030, 2030-2032, and 2032-2034 biennial budgets for public education, the Department of Education shall include a recommendation to the Governor to authorize sufficient Literary Fund revenues to make debt service payments for these programs in fiscal years 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, and 2033.

d. 1) An education technology grant program shall be conducted through the Virginia Public School Authority, through the issuance of equipment notes in an amount estimated at $56,002,800 in fiscal year 2027 and $56,163,600 in fiscal year 2028. Proceeds of the notes will be used to establish a computer-based instructional and testing system for the Standards of Learning (SOL) and to develop the capability for high speed Internet connectivity at high schools followed by middle schools followed by elementary schools. School divisions shall use these funds first to develop and maintain the capability to support the administration of online SOL testing for all students with the exception of students with a documented need for a paper SOL test.

2) Grant funds from the issuance of $56,002,800 in fiscal year 2027 and $56,163,600 in fiscal year 2028 in equipment notes are based on a grant of $26,000 per school and $50,000 per school division. For purposes of this grant program, eligible schools shall include schools that are subject to state accreditation and reporting membership in grades K through 12 as of September 30, 2026, for the fiscal year 2027 issuance, and September 30, 2027, for the fiscal year 2028 issuance, as well as regional vocational centers, special education centers, alternative education centers, regular school year Governor's Schools, CodeRVA Regional High School, and the School for the Deaf and the Blind. Schools that serve only pre-kindergarten students shall not be eligible for this grant.

3. a.) Supplemental grants shall be allocated to eligible divisions to support schools that are not fully accredited in accordance with this paragraph. Schools that include a ninth grade that administer SOL tests in Spring 2026 and that are not fully accredited for the second consecutive year, based on school accreditation ratings in effect for fiscal year 2026 and fiscal year 2027 will qualify to participate in the Virginia e-Learning Backpack Initiative in fiscal year 2027 and receive: (1) a supplemental grant of $400 per student reported in ninth grade fall membership in a qualifying school for the purchase of a laptop or tablet for that student and (2) a supplemental grant of $2,400 per qualifying school to purchase two content creation packages for teachers. Schools eligible to receive this supplemental grant in fiscal year 2027 shall continue to receive the grant for the number of subsequent years equaling the number of grades 9 through 12 in the qualifying school up to a maximum of four years. Schools that administer SOL tests in Spring 2027 and that are not fully accredited for the second consecutive year based on school accreditation ratings in effect for fiscal year 2027 and fiscal year 2028 will qualify to participate in the initiative in fiscal year 2028. Schools eligible for the supplemental grants in previous fiscal years shall continue to be eligible for the remaining years of their grant award. Schools eligible to receive this supplemental grant in fiscal year 2028 shall continue to receive the grant for the number of subsequent years equaling the number of grades 9 through 12 in the qualifying school up to a maximum of four years. Grants awarded to qualifying schools that do not have grades 10, 11, or 12 may transition with the students to the primary receiving school for all years subsequent to grade 9. Schools are eligible to receive these grants for a period of up to four years and shall not be eligible to receive a separate award in the future once the original award period has concluded. Schools that are fully accredited or that are new schools with conditional accreditation in their first year shall not be eligible to receive this supplemental grant.

4) Required local match:

a) Localities are required to provide a match for these funds equal to 20 percent of the grant amount, including the supplemental grants provided pursuant to paragraph 3.a.). At least 25 percent of the local match, including the match for supplemental grants, shall be used for teacher training in the use of instructional technology, with the remainder spent on other required uses. The Superintendent of Public Instruction is authorized to reduce the required local match for school divisions with a composite index of local ability-to-pay below 0.2000. The Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind is exempt from the match requirement.

b) School divisions that administer 100 percent of SOL tests online in all elementary, middle, and high schools may use up to 75 percent of their required local match to purchase targeted technology-based interventions. Such interventions may include the necessary technology and software to support online learning, technology-based content systems, content management systems, technology equipment systems, information and data management systems, and other appropriate technologies that support the individual needs of learners. School divisions that receive supplemental grants pursuant to paragraph 3.a.) above shall use the funds in qualifying schools to purchase laptops and tablets for ninth grade students reported in fall membership and content creation packages for teachers.

5) The goal of the education technology grant program is to improve the instructional, remedial, and testing capabilities of the Standards of Learning for local school divisions and to increase the number of schools achieving full accreditation.

6) Funds shall be used in the following manner:

a) Each division shall use funds to reach a goal, in each high school, of: (1) a 5-to-1 student to computer ratio; (2) an Internet-ready local area network (LAN) capability; and (3) high speed access to the Internet. School connectivity (computers, LANs and network access) shall include sufficient download/upload capability to ensure that each student will have adequate access to Internet-based instructional, remedial and assessment programs.

b) When each high school in a division meets the goals established in paragraph a) above, the remaining funds

shall be used to develop similar capability in first the middle schools and then the elementary schools.

c) For purposes of establishing or enhancing a computer-based instructional program supporting the Standards of Learning pursuant to paragraph d. 1) above, these grant funds may be used to purchase handheld multifunctional computing devices that support a broad range of applications and that are controlled by operating systems providing full multimedia support and mobile Internet connectivity. School divisions that elect to use these grant funds to purchase such qualifying handheld devices must continue to meet the on-line testing requirements stated in paragraph d. 1) above.

d) School divisions shall be eligible to receive supplemental grants pursuant to paragraph 3.a.) above. These supplemental grants shall be used in qualifying schools for the purchase of laptops and tablets for ninth grade students reported in fall membership and content creation packages for teachers. Participating school divisions will be required to select a core set of electronic textbooks, applications and online services for productivity, learning management, collaboration, practice, and assessment to be included on all devices. In addition, participating school divisions will assume recurring costs for electronic textbook purchases and maintenance.

e) Pursuant to § 15.2-1302, Code of Virginia, and in the event that two or more school divisions became one school division, whether by consolidation of only the school divisions or by consolidation of the local governments, such resulting division shall be provided funding through this program on the basis of having the same number of school divisions as existed prior to September 30, 2000.

7) Local school divisions shall maximize the use of available federal funds, including E-Rate Funds, and to the extent possible, use such funds to supplement the program and meet the goals of this program.

e. The Department of Education shall maintain criteria to determine if high schools, middle schools, or elementary schools have the capacity to meet the goals of this initiative. The Department of Education shall be responsible for the project management of this program.

f. 1) In the event that, on any scheduled payment date of bonds or notes of the Virginia Public School Authority (VPSA) issued for the purpose described in § 22.1-166.2, Code of Virginia, and not benefiting from the provisions of either § 22.1-168 (iii), (iv) and (v), Code of Virginia, or § 22.1-168.1, Code of Virginia, the available moneys in the Literary Fund are less than the amounts authorized for debt service due on such bonds or notes of the VPSA on such date, there is hereby appropriated to the VPSA from the general fund a sum equal to such deficiency.

2) The Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the VPSA shall, on or before November 1 of each year, make and deliver to the Governor and the Secretary of Finance a certificate setting forth his estimate of total debt service during each fiscal year of the biennium on bonds and notes of the VPSA issued and projected to be issued during such biennium pursuant to the resolution referred to in paragraph 1) above. The Governor's budget submission each year shall include provisions for the payment of debt service pursuant to paragraph 1) above.

g. Unobligated proceeds of the notes, including investment income derived from the proceeds of the notes may be used to pay interest on, or to decrease principal of the notes or to fund a portion of such other educational technology grants as authorized by the General Assembly.

h. 1) For the purposes of § 56-232, Code of Virginia, "Contracts of Telephone Companies with State Government" and for the purposes of § 56-234 "Contracts for Service Rendered by a Telephone Company for the State Government" shall be deemed to include communications lines into public schools which are used for educational technology. The rate structure for such lines shall be negotiated by the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Chief Information Officer of the Virginia Information Technologies Agency. Further, the Superintendent and Director are authorized to encourage the development of "by-pass" infrastructure in localities where it fails to obtain competitive prices or prices consistent with the best rates obtained in other parts of the state.

2) The State Corporation Commission, in its consideration of the discount for services provided to elementary schools, secondary schools, and libraries and the universal service funding mechanisms as provided under § 254 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, is hereby encouraged to make the discounts for intrastate services provided to elementary schools, secondary schools, and libraries for educational purposes as large as is prudently possible and to fund such discounts through the universal fund as provided in § 254 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. The commission shall proceed as expeditiously as possible in implementing these discounts and the funding mechanism for intrastate services, consistent with the rules of the Federal Communications Commission aimed at the preservation and advancement of universal service.

15. Security Equipment Payments

1) A security equipment grant program shall be conducted through the Virginia Public School Authority, through the issuance of equipment notes in an amount estimated at up to $12,000,000 in fiscal year 2027 and $12,000,000 in fiscal year 2028 in conjunction with the Virginia Public School Authority technology notes program authorized in C.14. of this Item. Proceeds of the notes will be used to help offset the related costs associated with the purchase of appropriate security equipment that will improve and help ensure the safety of students attending public schools in Virginia.

2) The Department of Education shall authorize estimated amounts as indicated in Table 1 from the Literary Fund to provide debt service payments for the security equipment grant programs conducted through the Virginia Public School Authority in the referenced years.

Table 1

Grant Year	**FY 2027**	**FY 2028**
2022	$2,577,750	
2023	$2,585,250	$2,583,000
2024	$2,622,250	$2,624,000
2025	$2,631,250	$2,628,000
2026	$2,771,698	$2,771,698
2027		$2,771,698

3) It is the intent of the General Assembly to authorize sufficient Literary Fund revenues to pay debt service on the Virginia Public School Authority bonds or notes authorized for this program. In developing the proposed 2028-2030, 2030-2032, and 2032-2034 biennial budgets for public education, the Department of Education shall include a recommendation to the Governor to authorize sufficient Literary Fund revenues to make debt service payments for these programs in fiscal years 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, and 2033.

4) In the event that, on any scheduled payment date of bonds or notes of the Virginia Public School Authority issued for the purpose described in § 22.1-166.2, Code of Virginia, and not benefiting from the provisions of either § 22.1-168 (iii), (iv) and (v), Code of Virginia, or § 22.1-168.1, Code of Virginia, the available moneys in the Literary Fund are less than the amounts authorized for debt service due on such bonds or notes on such date, there is hereby appropriated to the Virginia Public School Authority from the general fund a sum equal to such deficiency.

5) The Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the Virginia Public School Authority shall, on or before November 1 of each year, deliver to the Governor and the Secretary of Finance a certificate setting forth his

estimate of total debt service during each fiscal year of the biennium on bonds and notes issued and projected to be issued during such biennium. The Governor's budget submission each year shall include provisions for the payment of debt service pursuant to paragraph 1) above.

6) Grant award funds from the issuance of up to $12,000,000 in fiscal year 2027 and $12,000,000 in fiscal year 2028 in equipment notes shall be distributed to eligible school divisions. The grant awards will be based on a competitive grant basis of up to $250,000 per school division. School divisions will be permitted to apply annually for grant funding. For purposes of this program, eligible schools shall include schools that are subject to state accreditation and reporting membership in grades K through 12 as of September 30, 2026, for the fiscal year 2027 issuance, and September 30, 2027, for the fiscal year 2028 issuance, as well as regional vocational centers, special education centers, alternative education centers, regular school year Governor's Schools, and the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind.

7) School divisions would submit their application to Department of Education by August 1 of each year based on the criteria developed by the Department of Education in collaboration with the Department of Criminal Justice Services who will provide requested technical support. Furthermore, the Department of Education will have the authority to make such grant awards to such school divisions.

8) It is also the intent of the General Assembly that, beginning with fiscal year 2020, the total amount of the grant awards shall not exceed $60,000,000 over any ongoing revolving five year period.

9) Required local match:

a) Localities are required to provide a match for these funds equal to 25 percent of the grant amount. The Superintendent of Public Instruction is authorized to reduce the required local match for school divisions with a composite index of local ability-to-pay below 0.2000. The Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind is exempt from the match requirement.

b) Pursuant to § 15.2-1302, Code of Virginia, and in the event that two or more school divisions became one school division, whether by consolidation of only the school divisions or by consolidation of the local governments, such resulting division shall be provided funding through this program on the basis of having the same number of school divisions as existed prior to September 30, 2000.

c) Local school divisions shall maximize the use of available federal funds, including E-Rate Funds, and to the extent possible, use such funds to supplement the program and meet the goals of this program.

16. Early Reading Intervention Payments

a. An additional payment of $49,343,298 the first year and $48,987,538 the second year from the Lottery Proceeds Fund shall be disbursed by the Department of Education to local school divisions for the purposes of providing early reading intervention services to students in grades kindergarten through 3 who demonstrate deficiencies based on their individual performance on diagnostic tests which have been approved by the Department of Education. The Department of Education shall review the tests of any local school board that requests authority to use a test other than the state-provided test to ensure that such local test uses criteria for the early diagnosis of reading deficiencies that are similar to those criteria used in the state-provided test. The Department of Education shall make the state-provided diagnostic test used in this program available to local school divisions. School divisions shall report the results of the diagnostic tests to the Department of Education on an annual basis at a time to be determined by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

b. These payments shall be based on the state's share of the cost of providing two and one-half hours of additional instruction each week for an estimated number of students in each school division at a student to teacher ratio of five to one. The estimated number of students in each school division in each year shall be determined by

multiplying the projected number of students reported in each school division's fall membership in grades kindergarten, 1, 2, and 3 by the percent of students who are determined to need services based on diagnostic tests administered in the most recent year that data is available in that school division.

c. These payments are available to any school division that certifies to the Department of Education that an intervention program will be offered to such students and that each student who receives an intervention will be assessed again at the end of that school year. At the beginning of the school year, local school divisions shall partner with the parents of those third grade students in the division who demonstrate reading deficiencies, discussing with them a developed plan for remediation and retesting. Such intervention programs, at the discretion of the local school division, may include, but not be limited to, the use of: special reading teachers; trained aides; full-time early literacy tutors; volunteer tutors under the supervision of a certified teacher; computer-based reading tutorial programs; aides to instruct in-class groups while the teacher provides direct instruction to the students who need extra assistance; or extended instructional time in the school day or year for these students. Localities receiving these payments are required to match these funds based on the composite index of local ability-to-pay.

d. In the event that a school division does not use the diagnostic test provided by the Department of Education in the year that serves as the basis for updating the funding formula for this program but has used it in past years, the Department of Education shall use the most recent data available for the division for the state-provided diagnostic test.

e. The results of all reading diagnostic tests and reading remediation shall be discussed with the student and the student's parent prior to the student being promoted to grade four.

f. Funds appropriated for Standards of Quality Remedial Summer School or At-Risk Add-On may also be used to meet the requirements of this program.

17. Standards of Learning Algebra Readiness Payments

a. An additional payment of $19,635,415 the first year and $19,479,312 the second year from the Lottery Proceeds Fund shall be disbursed by the Department of Education to local school divisions for the purposes of providing math intervention services to students in grades 6, 7, 8 and 9 who are at-risk of failing the Algebra I end-of-course test, as demonstrated by their individual performance on diagnostic tests which have been approved by the Department of Education. These amounts reflect $200,000 the first year and $200,000 the second year apportioned to each school division to account for the cost of the diagnostic test. The Department of Education shall review the tests to ensure that such local test uses state-provided criteria for diagnosis of math deficiencies which are similar to those criteria used in the state-provided test. The Department of Education shall make the state-provided diagnostic test used in this program available to local school divisions. School divisions shall report the results of the diagnostic tests to the Department of Education on an annual basis at a time to be determined by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

b. These payments shall be based on the state's share of the cost of providing two and one-half hours of additional instruction each week for an estimated number of students in each school division at a student to teacher ratio of ten to one. The estimate number of students in each school division shall be determined by multiplying the projected number of students reported in each school division's fall membership by the percent of students that qualify for the federal Free Lunch Program.

c. These payments are available to any school division that certifies to the Department of Education that an intervention program will be offered to such students and that each student who receives an intervention will be assessed again at the end of that school year. Localities receiving these payments are required to match these funds based on the composite index of local ability-to-pay.

18. English Learner Teacher Payments

A payment of $218,947,673 the first year and $224,876,211 the second year from the general fund shall be disbursed by the Department of Education to local school divisions to support the state's share of professional instructional positions for English Learner teachers. Local school divisions shall provide a local match based on the composite index of local ability-to-pay. The number of such English Learner teacher positions required pursuant to the Standards of Quality are as established below:

EL Student Proficiency Level	SOQ Staffing Required
One	1 position per 20 EL students
Two	1 position per 30 EL students
Three	1 position per 40 EL students
Four	1 position per 50 EL students
All Other Identified EL Students	1 position per 100 EL students

19. Special Education Instruction Payments

a. The Department of Education shall establish rates for all elements of Special Education Instruction Payments.

b.1) Out of the appropriations in this Item, the Department of Education shall make available, subject to implementation by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, an amount estimated at $112,686,265 the first year and $107,686,265 the second year from the Lottery Proceeds Fund for the purpose of the state's share of the eligible costs reported for services to students qualifying through the Students with Intensive Support Needs Application (SISNA). Notwithstanding any contrary provision of law, the state's share of these costs shall be based on the composite index of local ability-to-pay.

2) (i) The Department of Education is directed to expand the disability categories eligible for payments through this program. To select expanded disability categories, the Department shall consider students with complex behavioral needs that otherwise would be referred to private day school placements.

(ii) Of this amount, $10,000,000 the first year shall be prioritized for payments to serve students through the expanded disability categories. These funds shall not revert to the general fund at the end of fiscal year 2027 but shall be reappropriated for expenditure for the same purpose in fiscal year 2028.

3) The Department of Education shall annually report for the SISNA program the total and per pupil local and state costs for the program and the number of students served, disaggregated by school division and primary disability category. For the purpose of this report, the number of students and per pupil costs shall be adjusted to reflect length of enrollment in the program. Such report shall be posted to the Department's website annually beginning no later than December 1, 2026.

c. Out of the amounts for Financial Assistance for Categorical Programs, $46,276,066 the first year and $48,048,609 the second year from the general fund is appropriated to permit the Department of Education to enter into agreements with selected local school boards for the provision of educational services to children residing in certain hospitals, clinics, and detention homes by employees of the local school boards. The portion of these funds provided for educational services to children residing in local or regional detention homes shall only be determined on the basis of children detained in such facilities through a court order issued by a court of the Commonwealth. The selection and employment of instructional and administrative personnel under such agreements will be the

responsibility of the local school board in accordance with procedures as prescribed by the local school board. State payments for the first year to the local school boards operating these programs will be based on certified expenditures from the fourth quarter of FY 2026 and the first three quarters of FY 2027. State payments for the second year to the local school boards operating these programs will be based on certified expenditures from the fourth quarter of FY 2027 and the first three quarters of FY 2028.

20. Vocational Education Instruction Payments

a. It is the intention of the General Assembly that the Department of Education explore initiatives that will encourage greater cooperation between jurisdictions and the Virginia Community College System in meeting the needs of public school systems.

b. This appropriation includes $1,800,000 the first year and $1,800,000 the second year from the Lottery Proceeds Fund for secondary vocational-technical equipment. A base allocation of $2,000 each year shall be available for all divisions, with the remainder of the funding distributed on the basis of student enrollment in secondary vocational-technical courses. State funds received for secondary vocational-technical equipment must be used to supplement, not supplant, any funds currently provided for secondary vocational-technical equipment within the locality. Local school divisions are not required to provide a local match in order to receive these state funds.

c.1) This appropriation includes an additional $2,000,000 the first year and $2,000,000 the second year from the Lottery Proceeds Fund to update vocational-technical equipment to industry standards providing students with classroom experience that translates to the workforce.

2) Of this amount, $1,400,000 the first year and $1,400,000 the second year is provided for vocational-technical equipment in high-demand, high-skill, and fast-growth industry sectors as identified by the Virginia Board of Workforce Development and based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Virginia Employment Commission.

3) Of this amount, $600,000 the first year and $600,000 the second year will be awarded based on competitive innovative program grants for high-demand and fast-growth industry sectors with priority given to state-identified challenged schools, the Governor's Science Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) academies, and the Governor's Health Science Academies.

d. This appropriation includes $1,831,464 the first year and $1,831,464 the second year from the Lottery Proceeds Fund to support the Path to Industry Certification program. Of this amount, $500,000 the first year and $500,000 the second year shall support credentialing testing materials for students and professional development for instructors in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics-health sciences (STEM-H) career and technical education programs.

21. Adult Education Payments

State funds shall be used to reimburse general adult education programs on a fixed cost per pupil or cost per class basis. No state funds shall be used to support vocational noncredit courses.

22. General Education Payments

a. This appropriation includes $2,410,988 the first year and $2,410,988 the second year from the Lottery Proceeds Fund to support Race to GED. Out of this appropriation, $465,375 the first year and $465,375 the second year shall be used for PluggedIn VA.

b. This appropriation includes $1,387,240 the first year and $1,387,240 the second year from the Lottery Proceeds Fund to support Project Graduation and any associated administrative and contractual service expenditures related

to this initiative.

23. Individual Student Alternative Education Program (ISAEP) Payments

Out of this appropriation, $2,247,581 the first year and $2,247,581 in the second year from the Lottery Proceeds Fund shall be provided for the secondary schools' Individual Student Alternative Education Program (ISAEP), pursuant to Chapter 488 and Chapter 552 of the 1999 Session of the General Assembly.

24. Foster Children Education Payments

a. An additional state payment is provided from the Lottery Proceeds Fund for the prior year's local operations costs, as determined by the Department of Education, for each pupil not a resident of the school division providing his education (a) who has been placed in foster care or other custodial care within the geographical boundaries of such school division by a Virginia agency, whether state or local, which is authorized under the laws of this Commonwealth to place children; (b) who has been placed in an orphanage or children's home which exercises legal guardianship rights; (c) who is a resident of Virginia and has been placed, not solely for school purposes, in a child-caring institution or group home; or (d) who is a student that was formerly in foster care upon reaching 18 years of age but who has not yet reached 22 years of age. For pupils included in subsection (d), the school division shall keep an accurate record of the number of days in which such child was enrolled in its public schools and shall be included in the division's certification provided to the Board of Education by July 1 each school year per § 22.1-101.1 C, Code of Virginia.

b. This appropriation provides $12,194,417 the first year and $13,126,037 the second year from the Lottery Proceeds Fund to support children attending public school who have been placed in foster care or other such custodial care across jurisdictional lines, as provided by subsections A and B of § 22.1-101.1, Code of Virginia. To the extent these funds are not adequate to cover the full costs specified therein, the Department is authorized to expend unobligated balances in this Item for this support.

25. Sales Tax Payments

a. This is a sum-sufficient appropriation for distribution to counties, cities and towns a portion of net revenue from the state sales and use tax, in support of the Standards of Quality (Title 22.1, Chapter 13.2, Code of Virginia) (See the Attorney General's opinion of August 3, 1982).

b. Certification of payments and distribution of this appropriation shall be made by the State Comptroller.

c. The distribution of state sales tax funds shall be made in equal bimonthly payments at the middle and end of each month.

26. Adult Literacy Payments

a. Appropriations in this Item include $125,000 the first year and $125,000 the second year from the general fund for the ongoing literacy programs conducted by Mountain Empire Community College.

b. Out of this appropriation, the Department of Education shall provide $100,000 the first year and $100,000 the second year from the general fund for the Virginia Literacy Foundation grants to support programs for adult literacy including those delivered by community-based organizations and school divisions providing services for adults with 0-9th grade reading skills.

27. Governor's School Payments

a. Out of the amounts for Governor's School Payments, the Department of Education shall provide assistance for

the state share of the incremental cost of regular school year Governor's Schools based on each participating locality's composite index of local ability-to-pay. Participating school divisions must certify that no tuition is assessed to students for participation in this program.

b.1) Out of the amounts for Governor's School Payments, the Department of Education shall provide assistance for the state share of the incremental cost of summer residential Governor's Schools and Foreign Language Academies to be based on the greater of the state's share of the composite index of local ability-to-pay or 50 percent. Participating school divisions must certify that no tuition is assessed to students for participation in this program if they are enrolled in a public school.

2) Out of the amounts for Governor's School Payments, $41,000 the first year and $41,000 the second year is provided to support the Hanover Regional Summer Governor's School for Career and Technical Advancement, which was established pursuant to Chapter 425, 2014 Acts of Assembly, and Chapter 665, 2015 Acts of Assembly.

c. For the Summer Governor's Schools and Foreign Language Academies programs, the Superintendent of Public Instruction is authorized to adjust the tuition rates, types of programs offered, length of programs, and the number of students enrolled in order to maintain costs within the available state and local funds for these programs.

d. It shall be the policy of the Commonwealth that state general fund appropriations not be used for capital outlay, structural improvements, renovations, or fixed equipment costs associated with initiation of existing or proposed Governor's schools. State general fund appropriations may be used for the purchase of instructional equipment for such schools, subject to certification by the Superintendent of Public Instruction that at least an equal amount of funds has been committed by participating school divisions to such purchases.

e. The Board of Education shall not take any action that would increase the state's share of costs associated with the Governor's Schools as set forth in this Item. This provision shall not prohibit the Department of Education from submitting requests for the increased costs of existing programs resulting from updates to student enrollment for school divisions currently participating in existing programs or for school divisions that begin participation in existing programs. If a school division wishes to begin participation in an existing program, the division shall first receive approval from the Board of Education to begin enrollment and to request state funding. Any additional state share of cost supporting enrollment or participation changes to Governor's Schools is subject to approval and appropriation by the Governor and the General Assembly.

f.1) Regular school year Governor's Schools are funded through this Item based on the state's share of the incremental per pupil cost for providing such programs for each student attending a Governor's School up to a cap of 1,800 students per Governor's School in the first year and a cap of 1,800 students per Governor's School in the second year. This incremental per pupil payment shall be adjusted for the composite index of the school division that counts such students attending an academic year Governor's School in their March 31 Average Daily Membership. It is the intent of the General Assembly that this incremental per pupil amount be in addition to the basic aid per pupil funding provided to the affected school division for such students. Therefore, local school divisions are encouraged to provide the appropriate portion of the basic aid per pupil funding to the Governor's Schools for students attending these programs, adjusted for costs incurred by the school division for transportation, administration, and any portion of the day that the student does not attend a Governor's School.

2) Students attending a revolving Academic Year Governor's School program for only one semester shall be counted as 0.50 of a full-time equivalent student and will be funded for only fifty percent of the full-year funded per pupil amount. Funding for students attending a revolving Academic Year program will be adjusted based upon actual September 30th and January 30th enrollment each fiscal year. For purposes of this Item, revolving programs shall mean Academic Year Governor's School programs that admit students on a semester basis.

3) Students attending a continuous, non-revolving Academic Year Governor's School program shall be counted as a full-time equivalent student and will be funded for the full-year funded per pupil amount. Funding for students

attending a continuous, non-revolving Academic Year Governor's School program will be adjusted based upon actual September 30th student enrollment each fiscal year. For purposes of this Item, continuous, non-revolving programs shall mean Academic Year Governor's School programs that only admit students at the beginning of the school year. Fairfax County Public Schools shall not reduce local per pupil funding for the Thomas Jefferson Governor's School below the amounts appropriated for the 2003-2004 school year.

g. All regional Governor's Schools are encouraged to provide full-day grades 9 through 12 programs.

h. Out of the appropriation included in paragraph C.38. of this item, $1,211,938 the first year and $2,499,538 the second year from the general fund is provided in the Academic Year Governor's School funding allocation to increase the per pupil amount as an add-on for a compensation supplement equal to 4.0 percent of base pay on July 1, 2026, and 4.0 percent of base pay on July 1, 2027, for Academic Year Governor's School instructional and support positions.

i. Each Academic Year Governor's School shall set diversity goals for its student body and faculty, develop a plan to meet said goals in collaboration with community partners at public meetings, and such goals and plan shall be published on the school's website. Each school shall submit a report to the Governor by October 1 of each year on its goals and status of implementing its plan, and such report shall be published on the school's website. The report shall include, but not be limited to the following: utilization of universal screenings in feeder divisions; admission processes in place or under consideration that promote access for historically underserved students; and outreach and communication efforts deployed to recruit historically underserved students. The report shall include the racial/ethnic make-up and socioeconomic diversity of its students, faculty, and applicants.

j. Notwithstanding § 22.1-26, Code of Virginia, or any other provision of law, any academic year Governor's School established pursuant to § 22.1-26, Code of Virginia, shall be subject to approval by the General Assembly, and shall be included in the introduced budget bill pursuant to § 2.2-1509, Code of Virginia.

28. School Nutrition Payments

It is provided that, subject to implementation by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, no disbursement shall be made out of the appropriation for school nutrition to any locality in which the schools permit the sale of competitive foods in food service facilities or areas during the time of service of food funded pursuant to this Item.

29. School Breakfast Payments

a. Out of this appropriation, $19,576,470 the first year and $20,389,355 the second year from the Lottery Proceeds Fund is included to continue a state funded incentive program to maximize federal school nutrition revenues and increase student participation in the school breakfast program. These funds are available to any school division as a reimbursement for breakfast meals served that are in excess of the baseline established by the Department of Education. The per meal reimbursement shall be $0.50; however, the department is authorized, but not required to reduce this amount proportionately in the event that the actual number of meals to be reimbursed exceeds the number on which this appropriation is based so that this appropriation is not exceeded.

b. In order to receive these funds, school divisions must certify that these funds will be used to supplement existing funds provided by the local governing body and that local funds derived from sources that are not generated by the school nutrition programs have not been reduced or eliminated. The funds shall be used to improve student participation in the school breakfast program. These efforts may include, but are not limited to, reducing the per meal price paid by students, reducing competitive food sales in order to improve the quality of nutritional offerings in schools, increasing access to the school breakfast program, or providing programs to increase parent and student knowledge of good nutritional practices. In no event shall these funds be used to reduce local tax revenues below the level appropriated to school nutrition programs in the prior year. Further, these funds must be provided to the school nutrition programs and may not be used for any other school purpose.

c.1) Out of this appropriation, $1,074,000 the first year and $1,074,000 the second year from the general fund is provided to fund an After-the-Bell Model breakfast program available on a voluntary basis to elementary, middle, and high schools where student eligibility for free or reduced lunch exceeds 45.0 percent for the participating eligible school, and to provide additional reimbursement for eligible meals served in the current traditional school breakfast program at all grade levels in any participating school. The Department of Education is directed to ensure that only eligible schools receive reimbursement funding for participating in the After-the-Bell school breakfast model. The schools participating in the program shall evaluate the educational impact of the models implemented that provide school breakfasts to students after the first bell of the school day, based on the guidelines developed by the Department of Education and submit the required report to the Department of Education no later than August 31 each year.

2) The Department of Education shall communicate, through Superintendent's Memo, to school divisions the types of breakfast serving models and the criteria that will meet the requirements for this State reimbursement, which may include, but are not limited to, breakfast in the classroom, grab and go breakfast, or a breakfast after first period. School divisions may determine the breakfast serving model that best applies to its students, so long as it occurs after the instructional day has begun. The Department of Education shall monthly transfer to each school division a reimbursement rate of $0.05 per breakfast meal that meets either of the established criteria in elementary schools and a reimbursement rate of $0.10 per breakfast meal that meets either of the established criteria in middle or high schools.

3) No later than July 1 each year, the Department of Education shall provide for a breakfast program application process for school divisions with eligible schools, including guidelines regarding specified required data to be compiled from the prior school year or years and for the upcoming school year program. The number of approved applications shall be based on the estimated number of sites that can be accommodated within the approved funding level. The Department of Education shall set criteria for establishing priority should the number of applications from eligible schools exceed the approved funding level. The reporting requirements must include: chronic absenteeism rates, student attendance and tardy arrivals, office discipline referrals, student achievement measures, teachers' and administrators' responses to the impact of the program on student hunger, student attentiveness, and overall classroom learning environment before and after implementation, and the financial impact on the division's school food program. Funded schools that do not provide data by August 31 are subject to exclusion from funding in the following year. The Department of Education shall collect and compile the results of the breakfast program and shall submit the report to the Governor and the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees no later than November 1 following each school year.

d. Divisions and individual schools are encouraged to use funds provided in this section to explore participation in the Community Eligibility Provision.

30. Clinical Faculty and Mentor Teacher Program Payments

This appropriation includes $1,000,000 the first year and $1,000,000 the second year from the Lottery Proceeds Fund to be paid to local school divisions for statewide Mentor Teacher Programs to assist pre-service teachers and beginning teachers to make a successful transition into full-time teaching. This appropriation also includes $318,750 the first year and $318,750 the second year from the general fund for Clinical Faculty programs to assist pre-service teachers and beginning teachers to make a successful transition into full-time teaching. Such programs shall include elements which are consistent with the following:

a. An application process for localities and school/higher education partnerships that wish to participate in the programs;

b. For Clinical Faculty programs only, provisions for a local funding or institutional commitment of 50 percent, to match state grants of 50 percent;

c. Program plans which include a description of the criteria for selection of clinical faculty and mentor teachers, training, support, and compensation for clinical faculty and mentor teachers, collaboration between the school division and institutions of higher education, the clinical faculty and mentor teacher assignment process, and a process for evaluation of the programs;

d. The Department of Education shall allow flexibility to local school divisions and higher education institutions regarding compensation for clinical faculty and mentor teachers consistent with these elements of the programs; and

e. It is the intent of the General Assembly that no preference between pre-service or beginning teacher programs be construed by the language in this Item. School divisions operating beginning teacher mentor programs shall receive equal consideration for funding.

31. Career Switcher/Alternative Licensure Payments

Appropriations in this Item include $279,983 the first year and $279,983 the second year from the general fund to provide grants to school divisions that employ mentor teachers for new teachers entering the profession through the alternative route to licensure as prescribed by the Board of Education.

32. Virginia Workplace Readiness Skills Assessment

Appropriations in this Item include $308,655 the first year and $308,655 the second year from the general fund to provide support grants to school divisions for standard diploma graduates. To provide flexibility, school divisions may use the state grants for the actual assessment or for other industry certification preparation and testing.

33. Early Reading Specialists Initiative

a. An additional payment of $3,476,790 the first year and $3,476,790 the second year from the general fund shall be disbursed by the Department of Education to qualifying local school divisions for the purpose of providing a reading specialist for schools with a third grade that rank lowest statewide on the reading Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments. Funding for a reading specialist during the 2026-2028 biennium shall be based on the results of the Spring 2025 reading SOL assessments. Such schools shall be eligible to receive the state share of funding for both years of the biennium. Following certification from a school division that it will not participate in the program, the Department is authorized to identify additional eligible schools based upon the list of schools that rank lowest on the Spring 2025 SOL reading assessment.

b. These payments shall be based on the state's share of the cost of providing one reading specialist per qualifying school.

c. These payments are available to any school division with a qualifying school that certifies to the Department of Education that the division has hired a reading specialist or reading coach to provide direct services to children reading below grade level in the school to improve reading achievement for the purpose of creating additional instructional time for reading specialists or reading coaches to work with students reading below grade level to improve reading achievement. Additionally, school divisions shall certify that the reading specialists or reading coaches hired pursuant to this program are in addition to the reading specialist positions funded through Basic Aid and required to serve students at the qualifying school.

d. These payments also are available to any school division with a qualifying school that certifies to the Department of Education that the division is supporting tuition for collegiate programs and instruction for

currently employed instructional school personnel to earn the credentials necessary to meet licensure requirements to be endorsed as a reading specialist. Additionally, school divisions shall certify that the currently employed instructional school personnel whose tuition is supported pursuant to this program are in addition to the reading specialist positions funded through Basic Aid and required to serve students at the qualifying school.

e. School divisions receiving these payments are required to match these funds based on the composite index of local ability-to-pay.

f. Within the fiscal year, any funds not awarded from this program may be awarded to eligible schools under the Math/Reading Instructional Specialist Initiative.

34. Math/Reading Instructional Specialist Initiative

a. Included in this appropriation is $1,834,538 the first year and $1,834,538 the second year from the general fund in additional payments for reading or math instructional specialists at underperforming schools. From this amount, the state share of one reading or math specialist shall be provided to local school divisions with schools which rank lowest statewide on the Spring Standards of Learning (SOL) math or reading assessment. Funding for one math or reading specialist during the 2026-2028 biennium shall be based on the results of the Spring 2025 SOL assessments. Such schools shall be eligible to receive the state share of funding for both years of the biennium. If, following certification from a school division that it will not participate in the program, the Department is authorized to identify additional eligible schools based upon the list of schools that rank lowest on the Spring 2025 SOL math or reading assessment.

b. These payments are available to any school division with a qualifying school that certifies to the Department of Education that the division has (1) hired a math or reading instructional specialist, or (2) is supporting tuition for collegiate programs and instruction for currently employed instructional school personnel to earn the credentials necessary to meet licensure requirements to be endorsed as a math specialist or a reading specialist. Localities receiving these payments are required to match these funds based on the composite index of local ability-to-pay.

c. School divisions that elect to use funding to support tuition for collegiate programs and instruction for currently employed instructional school personnel pursuant to paragraph b. shall provide documentation of these costs to the Department of Education prior to receiving state funds. The Department of Education shall provide state funding for the lesser of the actual cost or the state share of a math or reading specialist position per eligible school for funds used in such a manner.

d. The Department of Education is authorized to utilize available funding appropriated to the Early Reading Specialist Initiative contained in this Item to pay for instructional specialists at additional eligible schools, or to support tuition for collegiate programs and instruction for currently employed instructional school personnel at additional eligible schools to earn the credentials necessary to meet licensure requirements to be endorsed as an instructional specialist.

e. Within the fiscal year, any funds not awarded from this program may be awarded to eligible schools under the Early Reading Specialists Initiative.

f. The Department of Education may award prorated state funds for specialist positions filled after the beginning of the school year.

35. Broadband Connectivity Capabilities

By November 1 each year, school divisions shall report to the Department of Education the status of broadband connectivity capability of schools in the division on a form to be provided by the Department. Such report shall include school-level information on the method of Internet service delivery, the level of bandwidth capacity and

the degree such capacity is sufficient for delivery of school-wide digital resources and instruction, degree of internet connectivity via Wi-Fi, cost information related to Internet connectivity, data security, and such other pertinent information as determined by the Department of Education. The Department shall provide a summary of the division responses in a report to be made available on its agency Web site.

36. Infrastructure and Operations Per Pupil Funds

a. Out of this appropriation, an amount estimated at $336,361,275 the first year and $276,361,277 the second year from the Lottery Proceeds Fund shall be disbursed by the Department of Education to local school divisions to support the state share of an estimated $510.98 per pupil the first year and $422.56 per pupil the second year in adjusted March 31 average daily membership. These per pupil amounts are subject to change for the purpose of payment to school divisions based on the actual March 31 ADM collected each year. These funds shall be matched by the local government, based on the composite index of local ability-to-pay. Further, in order to receive this funding, the locality in which the school division is located shall appropriate these funds solely for educational purposes and shall not use such funds to reduce total local operating expenditures for public education below the amount expended by the locality for such purposes in the year upon which the 2020-2022 biennial Standards of Quality expenditure data were based; provided however that no locality shall be required to maintain a per-pupil expenditure which is greater than the per pupil amount expended by the locality for such purposes in the year upon which the 2020-2022 biennial Standards of Quality expenditure data were based. The Department of Education is authorized each year to temporarily suspend Infrastructure and Operations Per Pupil Allocation payments made to school divisions from Lottery funds to ensure that any shortfall in Lottery revenue can be accounted for in the remaining Infrastructure and Operations Per Pupil Allocation payments to be made for the year.

b. From the amounts listed above, funds are provided to ensure that small school divisions receive an Infrastructure and Operations payment of at least $200,000 each year. Divisions receiving additional funds for a payment of at least $200,000 shall only be required to provide the local match on the per pupil amount distributed in paragraph C.36.a.

c. Of the amounts listed above, no more than 60 percent shall be used for recurring costs and at least 40 percent shall be spent on nonrecurring expenditures by the relevant school divisions. Nonrecurring costs shall include school construction, additions, infrastructure, site acquisition, renovations, school buses, technology, and other expenditures related to modernizing classroom equipment, and debt service payments on school projects completed or initiated during the last 10 years. The Department of Education shall consider such nonrecurring expenses by school divisions from local funds to be credited toward their required local match under this program.

d. Any funds provided to school divisions that are unexpended as of June 30, 2027, and June 30, 2028, shall not revert to the Commonwealth but shall be carried on the books of the locality in local escrow accounts pursuant to § 22.1-175.5, to be appropriated to the school division for use for the same purpose.

e. Beginning fiscal year 2028, the Department of Education is authorized to withhold a portion of Lottery-funded Infrastructure and Operations Per Pupil Funds otherwise allocated to any school division that does not comply with the Annual School Report reporting requirements in § 22.1-81, Code of Virginia, and in accordance with the timeline specified by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Payments may be withheld in a fiscal year for divisions that fail to report for the fiscal year ending the preceding June 30. The local school division shall be given an opportunity to correct its compliance with § 22.1-81, Code of Virginia, and if corrected in a timely manner, shall have the full amount of its Infrastructure and Operations Per Pupil Funds allocation restored during the fiscal year. The Department of Education shall establish a policy for withholding partial payment of these funds, which shall include, but not be limited to: an appropriate extension period for division reporting and compliance with § 22.1-81, Code of Virginia; the maximum amount or percentage of such funds that may be withheld during a fiscal year; and a procedure by which the division may have the full allocation of such payments restored during the fiscal year. The Department of Education shall report this policy to local school divisions no later than September 30,

2026, with a notice that the policy will be effective beginning fiscal year 2028. Further, the Department shall include this policy in its Annual School Report instructions each year thereafter.

37. Special Education Endorsement Program

a. Notwithstanding § 22.1-290.02, Code of Virginia, out of this appropriation, $437,186 the first year and $437,186 the second year from the general fund is provided for traineeships and program operation grants that shall be awarded to public Virginia institutions of higher education to prepare persons who are employed in the public schools of Virginia, state operated programs, or regional special education centers as special educators with a provisional license and enrolled either part-time or full-time in programs for the education of children with disabilities. Applicants shall be graduates of a regionally accredited college or university.

b. The award of such grants shall be made by the Department of Education, and the number of awards during any one year shall depend upon the amounts appropriated by the General Assembly for this purpose. The amount awarded for each traineeship shall be $600 for a minimum of three semester hours of course work in areas required for the special education endorsement to be taken by the applicant during a single semester or summer session. Only one traineeship shall be awarded to a single applicant in a single semester or summer session.

38. Compensation Supplement

a. Out of this appropriation, $252,476,642 the first year and $512,253,786 the second year from the general fund is provided for the state share of the following salary increases and related fringe benefit costs:

1) For the first year, a 4.0 percent salary increase effective July 1, 2026, for funded SOQ instructional and support positions. Sufficient funds are appropriated in this act to finance, on a statewide basis, the state share of up to a 4.0 percent salary increase effective July 1, 2026, to school divisions that certify to the Department of Education that an equivalent increase will be provided to instructional and support personnel the first year. The state share of funding provided to a school division in support of this compensation supplement shall be prorated for school divisions that provide less than an average 4.0 percent salary increase the first year.

2) For the second year, an additional 4.0 percent salary increase effective July 1, 2027, for funded SOQ instructional and support positions. Sufficient funds are appropriated in this act to finance, on a statewide basis, the state share of up to an additional 4.0 percent salary increase effective July 1, 2027, to school divisions that certify to the Department of Education that an equivalent increase will be provided to instructional and support personnel the second year. The state share of funding provided to a school division in support of this compensation supplement shall be prorated for school divisions that provide less than an additional average 4.0 percent salary increase the second year. School divisions that provided an average increase in excess of 4.0 percent in the first year may credit the excess portion of the increase toward the second year for the purpose of accessing these funds in the second year.

3) Payments in the second year to any school division shall be based on providing the funds needed to continue the first year increase actually provided by the division plus the increase provided by the division in the second year.

b. Out of this appropriation, $1,211,938 the first year and $2,499,538 the second year from the general fund is provided for the state share of the salary increases stated in paragraph a. above for Academic Year Governor's Schools, and $765,060 the first year and $1,560,466 the second year from the Lottery Proceeds fund is provided for the state share of these salary increases for Regional Alternative Education Programs.

c. It is the intent that the average instructional and support position salaries are increased in local school divisions throughout the state by at least 4.0 percent the first year, at least an additional 4.0 percent the second year, resulting in a combined increase of at least 8.16 percent during the biennium.

d. The state funds that the school division is eligible to receive shall be matched by the local government based on the composite index of local ability-to-pay. This local match shall be calculated for funded SOQ instructional and support positions using an effective date of July 1, 2026, the first year and July 1, 2027, the second year. Local school divisions shall certify to the Department of Education that funds used as the local match are derived solely from local revenue sources.

e. This funding is not intended as a mandate to increase salaries.

39. School Meals Expansion

Out of this appropriation, $1,600,000 the first year and $1,600,000 the second year from the general fund is provided for local school divisions to reduce or eliminate the cost of school breakfast and school lunch for students who are eligible for reduced price meals under the federal National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. The Department of Education is authorized to reduce this amount proportionately so as not to exceed this appropriation.

40. Supplemental Support for Accomack and Northampton

Out of this appropriation, $1,750,000 the first year and $1,750,000 the second year from the Lottery Proceeds Fund shall be disbursed to provide support to Accomack and Northampton school divisions for teacher recruitment and retention efforts, including adjustments to salary scales to minimize the misalignment to salary scales of adjacent counties.

41. School Construction Assistance Program.

a. Out of this appropriation, $212,000,000 the first year and $135,000,000 the second year from the School Construction Fund and $172,000,000 the first year from the Literary Fund that shall be transferred into the School Construction Fund is provided for the Board of Education to award grants on a competitive basis from the Fund to local school boards that demonstrate poor building conditions, commitment, and need in order for such local school boards to fund the construction, expansion, or modernization of public school buildings, including public charter schools, regional public charter schools, and joint and regional schools. In the case of a regional or joint school, the school boards of the school divisions participating in such school may jointly apply. Any unobligated balance for this program on June 30 each year shall be reappropriated for expenditure in the next year for the same purpose.

b. The Board of Education shall develop guidelines for the administration of this program, which shall provide at a minimum that:

1. Grants shall be provided only for projects that conform to the Department of Education's “Guidelines for School Facilities in Virginia's Public Schools," as amended.

2. Grant awards shall be based on project costs, including planning, design, site acquisition and construction, the school division's local composite index, or in the case of regional or joint schools the average local composite index values for the school divisions participating in such school; and the fiscal stress category as designated by the Virginia Commission on Local Government in its most recent "Report on Comparative Revenue Capacity, Revenue Effort, and Fiscal Stress of Virginia's Counties and Cities" for the locality that contains the school division, or in the case of regional or joint schools the localities that contain the school divisions that participate in such school, as follows:

School Division

School divisions with a local composite index value below .3000, or contained in a locality designated with high fiscal stress

School divisions with a local composite index value at or above .3000 and below .4000, or contained in a locality designated wit

All other school divisions

3. A minimum qualifying score shall be met for a project to qualify for a grant award based on Board-developed scoring criteria. The Board shall set such minimum score at a level to ensure funds are reserved for critical school construction projects. Such scoring criteria shall provide appropriate weight to the following categories for the award of grants:

a.) Commitment, which may be demonstrated by factors such as: (i) an agreement by the local governing body to maintain or increase the percentage of local revenues dedicated to public education throughout the duration of the financing proposed for the project and (ii) the extent of project design and site acquisition for such project that has been completed prior to application of anticipated grant funds.

b.) Need, which may consider factors such as: (i) the percentage of students in the local school division or divisions eligible to receive free price meals; (ii) the percentage of residents of the locality or localities in which the local school division or divisions is located with incomes at or below the federal poverty guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; (iii) the composite index of local ability-to-pay for the local school division or divisions; (iv) debt capacity of the locality or localities in which the school division or divisions is located; and (v) the most recent fiscal stress score of the locality or localities that includes the local school division or divisions as designated by the Virginia Commission on Local Government.

c.) Poor school building conditions, which may consider factors such as: (i) the condition of the facilities proposed to be replaced or upgraded using these funds, including the current level of compliance of the existing facility with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq.) and the facilities potential threat to the health or safety of building occupants; (ii) the school division maintenance reserve tool established pursuant to Chapter 650 of the 2022 General Assembly; and (iii) the overall condition of other facilities within the school division.

4. If qualifying grant award requests exceed the amount of funds available, grants shall be awarded based on ranked project scores, and shall not be prorated.

5. The release of funds to grant awardees shall be reasonably aligned with the timing of incurred expenses.

6. A specific project shall only receive one grant award. The total project cost eligible to receive a grant shall be up to $100,000,000. Grant awards shall not be amended for any additional reasonable project costs after the Board awards a grant to a division.

c. For the purpose of this program, "project costs" shall include reasonable project construction costs as defined by the Board, including planning, design, site acquisition and construction, and not to include financing costs, outdoor facilities predominantly used for extracurricular athletic activities, loose equipment, and furniture.

d. The Board of Education shall submit an executive summary of the program, including details on projects funded each year and any necessary legislative or budget recommendations to improve the program, no later than December 1 of each year to the Chairs of the House Education Committee, Senate Education and Health Committee, House Appropriations Committee, and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee.

7. Local school boards shall not exclude public charter schools, regional public charter schools, or joint and regional schools from consideration for School Construction Assistance Program grants. Local school boards that fail to consider the school construction, expansion, or modernization needs of public charter schools, regional public charter schools, or joint and regional schools may be disqualified from receiving School Construction

Assistance Program grants.

8. Funds awarded to local school boards under the School Construction Assistance Program may not be diverted to other projects within the local school divisions or divisions. Local school boards that do not use the funds for the awarded purpose must repay the funds to the Department of Education.

42. Supplemental General Fund Payment in Lieu of Sales Tax on Food and Personal Hygiene Products

Out of this appropriation, $275,000,000 the first year and $276,100,000 the second year from the general fund shall be distributed to localities on the basis of the latest yearly estimate of school age population provided by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service as specified in this item for SOQ sales tax payments pursuant to § 58.1-611.1.C, Code of Virginia. These funds represent the reduction of sales tax distributions to school divisions resulting from the exemption of the state sales and use tax on food for human consumption and essential personal hygiene products. These payments shall be applied in the same manner as sales tax payments to offset the state and local shares of basic aid and shall require no local match.