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# 2019 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION POLICY STATEMENT

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## I. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The strength of our communities determines the strength of our democracy. Emotional, social, and economic poverty weakens the fabric of our society and threatens our democracy. Policy leaders must ensure access to opportunities and invest the proper resources necessary for all children to grow up in nurturing surroundings, and to reconnect and strengthen the bonds of individuals and institutions in communities so that they thrive and favorably compete in the global economy.

### A PLATFORM FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

VML endorses the National League of Cities' Platform for Children and Families that recognizes that strong communities are built on a foundation of strong families and neighborhoods. VML supports and encourages efforts by our communities and the state that emphasize:

- **Opportunities to learn and grow:** family literacy programs, quality out-of-school time programs and early childhood programs;
- **Safe neighborhoods to call home:** sufficient state support for local law enforcement, juvenile justice, and prisoner re-entry programs;
- **Healthy lifestyles & environment:** improving access to healthy foods, physical activity and recreation programs; and
- **Financially fit families:** workforce development, curbing predatory lenders, and increasing access to low-cost bank accounts and mainstream financial services.

VML supports approaches (such as the Virginia Grocery Incentive Fund as one example) to provide financial and technical support for businesses to help expand and

ensure greater access to healthy food for residents of the state.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL ISSUES & FUNDING

Federal, state and local governments share the same citizens and same taxpayers. Local governments request a restoration of a meaningful and fiscally-balanced intergovernmental partnership in human services and education.

### A working partnership.

- The federal and state governments should allow local governments maximum flexibility in developing and funding public/private partnerships to address human service needs.
- Local government must be a partner with the state and federal government in the process of developing regulations, policies, and allocation methods.
- The State should require interagency review of regulations to reconcile existing conflicts and to avoid duplication or conflict among agencies.
- The State should share data with communities and build a comprehensive human services data base to promote greater planning coordination and evaluation of services.

**Funding commitments.** Human services funding formulae should reflect identified needs, adequate resources to meet those needs, and not pit localities against each other. Equity in funding cannot be achieved by simply redistributing insufficient existing state aid among jurisdictions.

### Cost shifting and unfunded mandates.

VML opposes the imposition of new federal

1 or state requirements without the funding to  
2 pay for them. In the case of state mandates,  
3 as the state reduces its funding and  
4 assistance to localities, it must ease or  
5 eliminate requirements it is unwilling to  
6 support. In the case of federal mandates, the  
7 state must at the very least maintain its share  
8 of responsibility for program supervision  
9 and funding. For example:

- 10
- 11 • funding the administration of the
- 12 FAMIS eligibility and case
- 13 management without state support;
- 14 • paying the cost of federal penalties
- 15 when the state does not meet its
- 16 obligations for human services
- 17 programs, including adequate
- 18 administrative funding, technology,
- 19 training, and technical assistance
- 20 necessary to properly do the job;
- 21 • maintaining state funding for the
- 22 costs for federally-mandated and
- 23 state-supervised programs such as
- 24 adoption assistance, and
- 25 • restoring the state funding ratio for
- 26 local welfare administrative costs, in
- 27 which the state pays 80 percent and
- 28 the localities pay 20 percent.
- 29

30 **AGING SERVICES**

31 **Community programs.** As alternatives to  
32 institutionalized care wherever appropriate,  
33 the state should develop Medicaid waivers  
34 or otherwise fully fund community-based  
35 programs like companion services, respite  
36 care, homemaker services, adult group  
37 homes and adult day care for the elderly.

38  
39 **Housing.** The state should support policies  
40 that increase the affordability and  
41 availability of senior housing throughout the  
42 commonwealth.

43  
44 **OPIOIDS, HEROIN, SYNTHETIC**  
45 **DRUGS**

46 VML supports an intergovernmental and  
47 interdisciplinary partnership to address the  
48 epidemic of opioid and heroin overdoses in  
49 Virginia. Further, VML urges the federal  
50 government to actively address the public  
51 health threats posed by any emerging  
52 synthetic drugs that pose a similar  
53 addiction/overdose threat.

54  
55 VML supports the Commonwealth's policy  
56 framework that targets the following:

- 57 1) prevention – reduction in the supply
- 58 of legal opiates, and tracking and
- 59 reduction of the supply of illegal
- 60 opiates such as heroin and synthetic
- 61 substances;
- 62 2) harm reduction – active intervention
- 63 until treatment is available and
- 64 accepted;
- 65 3) treatment – for those who are
- 66 addicted, and support/recovery
- 67 resources for family members of
- 68 people in treatment; and
- 69 4) culture change - discourage
- 70 use/overuse of legal opioids, change
- 71 pain management expectations, and
- 72 remove stigma regarding addiction
- 73 treatment and recovery.
- 74

75 **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**

76 **Planning for the future of the community**  
77 **& facility system.**

78 Any plan for the future of the publicly-  
79 funded behavioral health and developmental  
80 services system should include adequate  
81 state funding for:

- 82 • A community-based, comprehensive
- 83 system of care;
- 84 • Urgent care needs in each
- 85 community, including crisis
- 86 intervention teams (CIT);
- 87 • Accessibility to inpatient beds and
- 88 crisis services on a regional basis,
- 89 potentially through public-private
- 90 partnerships, to decrease the need for

1 long-distance transports to access  
2 needed services for critical care;  
3 • Comprehensive services and  
4 supports for people returning to the  
5 community from any type of state  
6 facilities (public safety as well as  
7 behavioral health), as well as for  
8 people diverted from state facilities.  
9 • Children’s mental health services,  
10 including community-based early  
11 interventions and the Mental Health  
12 Initiative;  
13 • Medicaid waivers to eliminate  
14 service waiting lists; and  
15 • Availability of services for  
16 consumers voluntarily seeking  
17 treatment services, regardless of their  
18 ability to pay.

19  
20 Further, VML supports Community Services  
21 Boards (CSBs) as the single point-of-entry  
22 into the publicly-funded system of care and  
23 as a choice for services to individuals and  
24 families.

25  
26 Any restructuring plan should assure the  
27 following:

- 28 • Local flexibility in planning and service  
29 provision, particularly for local-only  
30 funds;
- 31 • No changes in the local match that  
32 would increase the burden on local taxes  
33 and budgets;
- 34 • Meaningful consultation with local  
35 officials and community services boards  
36 regarding strategies and funding  
37 proposals for publicly-funded services;
- 38 • Sufficient time and opportunity for  
39 public comment on any legislative  
40 proposals;
- 41 • Strategies to overcome past de-  
42 institutionalization errors, particularly  
43 the shifting of the burden of care to  
44 communities;

- 45 • Strategies to discourage the  
46 concentration of consumers in facility  
47 communities and in urban centers; and  
48 • State facilities are not so drastically  
49 reduced in size and scope that the  
50 potential for inpatient care is effectively  
51 eliminated.

52  
53 **Part C early intervention.** VML urges the  
54 General Assembly to assure full state  
55 funding for infants and toddlers eligible for  
56 therapeutic services under Part C of IDEA to  
57 improve their school readiness and quality  
58 of life.

59  
60 **Behavioral health services for youth**  
61 **funding.** The state should build upon its  
62 funding and seek federal-state funded  
63 waivers to provide behavioral health  
64 services, in particular, prevention services  
65 for youth. VML supports greater state  
66 funding to the Mental Health Initiative and  
67 other community-based initiatives to  
68 diagnose and serve children with behavioral  
69 health needs early, to prevent more complex,  
70 costly, and restrictive interventions from  
71 CSA or the juvenile justice system.

72  
73 **Treatment beds.** The state has greatly  
74 decreased state facility beds and state-  
75 funded services for children, including those  
76 with long-term or hard-to-treat conditions,  
77 and those in the state and local juvenile  
78 detention system. VML urges the state to  
79 continue its support of the Commonwealth  
80 Center for Children and Adolescents as a  
81 part of the array of behavioral health  
82 services, and to fund treatment beds for  
83 those committed to the juvenile justice  
84 system. Further, the state should fund  
85 supportive services for children leaving  
86 treatment and their families to further  
87 stabilize their living situations and allow for  
88 recovery.

89

1 **Service capacity.** VML encourages the  
2 state to establish a children’s behavioral  
3 health workforce development initiative to  
4 build service capacity throughout the state.  
5  
6 **Medicaid accountability and quality of**  
7 **care.** The league encourages adequate state  
8 oversight of, and accountability for,  
9 community-level services funded by  
10 Medicaid, whether those services are  
11 furnished through private or public  
12 providers.  
13  
14 **Substance abuse and behavioral health**  
15 **needs in the justice system.** VML supports  
16 the creation of state-funded programs and  
17 facilities, and funding of current programs,  
18 such as drug courts and day reporting  
19 centers, to divert individuals with mental  
20 illness from jails and juvenile detention into  
21 more appropriate community-based or in-  
22 patient treatment programs. VML opposes  
23 changes in state funding formulae to turn  
24 local and regional jails into in-patient  
25 behavioral health treatment centers.  
26  
27 **Needs of military veterans and families**  
28 Given the number of active military  
29 members, veterans, and military families  
30 living in Virginia, it is clear that behavioral  
31 health needs of soldiers returning home with  
32 PTSD and their families must be swiftly and  
33 adequately addressed. VML urges the  
34 federal government to increase funding and  
35 access to behavioral health and addiction  
36 treatment services for active members of the  
37 military (including National Guard and  
38 Reserves), returning veterans, and their  
39 family members.  
40  
41 **CHILDREN’S SERVICES ACT**  
42 In the last 20+ years Virginia has  
43 implemented just half of the CSA program.  
44 When the CSA was developed in the early  
45 1990s, the plan called for comprehensive  
46 prevention programs for at risk youth and

47 families. Unless and until the state commits  
48 to developing and funding services that  
49 address the roots of issues that bring  
50 children and families into CSA, the CSA  
51 program will continue as an expensive  
52 “catch-up” approach to addressing the  
53 complex needs of children and families.  
54  
55 **A realistic partnership.** The  
56 Commonwealth should establish a statutory  
57 provision for operation of this state-local  
58 partnership that appropriately reflects the  
59 shared responsibilities, the need for  
60 sufficient “rules and tools,” and recognizes  
61 the practical reality that correcting policy  
62 and procedural errors may take substantial  
63 time and resources.  
64  
65 **Administrative funding.** VML supports  
66 greater funding from the state to support the  
67 program’s substantial administrative  
68 requirements carried out at the local level.  
69  
70 **Base-budget funding.** The costs of CSA  
71 should be fully funded in the state’s base  
72 budget.  
73  
74 **Expansion of the mandated population.**  
75 VML opposes attempts to expand the CSA  
76 mandated population or turn CSA into the  
77 children’s mental health program. VML  
78 also opposes efforts to expand local  
79 responsibility for Medicaid match to new  
80 categories of individuals, or to require  
81 localities to pay the educational costs for  
82 children placed in residential treatment  
83 outside of the local FAPT process.  
84  
85 **Incentive funding.** The CSA funding  
86 formula should include an incentive  
87 component that rewards those local  
88 governments implementing innovative and  
89 cost-effective interventions.  
90  
91 **State agency policy coordination.** The  
92 State Executive Council must ensure that the

1 administrative and policy requirements of  
2 the state agencies involved in the CSA are  
3 consistent with one another and consistently  
4 applied to local governments.

5  
6 **Service coordination.** State and local  
7 governments should work together to ensure  
8 the greatest degree of coordination between  
9 Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and CSA  
10 service plans.

11  
12 **Sum sufficiency.** CSA serves many  
13 children who are entitled to sum sufficient  
14 services; the state must keep its commitment  
15 to fund its share of services costs for this  
16 population.

17  
18 **Utilization review.** Local governments  
19 must maintain the flexibility to develop  
20 utilization management processes that are  
21 approved by the State Executive Council.

## 22 23 **FACILITIES FOR ADULTS AND** 24 **YOUTH**

25 **Auxiliary grant program.** The state should  
26 assume full responsibility for the cost of the  
27 auxiliary grant program for elderly persons  
28 and people with disabilities.

29  
30 **Licensure and regulation of group homes.**  
31 VML urges the state to continue to work  
32 with local governments to assure adequate  
33 licensure and regulatory requirements are in  
34 place to assure community safety and well-  
35 being.

## 36 37 **HOMELESSNESS**

38 VML supports measures to prevent  
39 homelessness in Virginia and to assist the  
40 chronic homeless, including veterans, in  
41 obtaining appropriate rehabilitative and  
42 recovery services, job training and support,  
43 and affordable and appropriate housing.  
44 VML supports measures to remove barriers  
45 this population faces in meeting  
46 identification and residency requirements for

47 valid state-issued identification cards. VML  
48 urges the state to create a housing trust fund  
49 and to work with communities to develop  
50 and otherwise support housing for this  
51 population.

## 52 53 **JUVENILE JUSTICE PROGRAMS**

54 **Virginia Juvenile Community Crime**  
55 **Control Act (VJCCCA).** The Virginia  
56 Municipal League urges the General  
57 Assembly to restore the 71 percent funding  
58 reduction taken in the early 2000s to the  
59 Virginia Juvenile Community Crime Control  
60 Act (VJCCCA) program, and to support an  
61 equitable and stable funding allocation  
62 process for the program.

63  
64 The VJCCCA directs localities, in  
65 cooperation with judges, court-services unit  
66 directors, and Community Policy and  
67 Management Teams under the Children's  
68 Services Act to implement programs that  
69 divert youth from state or local confinement  
70 or help ensure the success of those re-  
71 entering the community from confinement.  
72 Every city and county participate in the  
73 program.

74  
75 VJCCCA gives judges the ability to order  
76 first-time and less serious offenders to  
77 services such as electronic monitoring,  
78 intensive individual or family counseling,  
79 and group homes. Such appropriate services  
80 reduce costlier and less suitable placements  
81 in local secure detention or state correctional  
82 facilities. It also effectively serves non-  
83 mandated youth under the Children's  
84 Services Act.

85  
86 VML opposes any effort to divert existing  
87 VJCCCA funds for other purposes; any new  
88 populations proposed for services under this  
89 program must be accompanied by additional  
90 state funding.

91

1 **System transformation.** VML supports  
2 juvenile justice system transformation that:  
3 • Gives juvenile detention centers  
4 flexibility, not mandates, to contract  
5 with the state to house lower-risk  
6 offenders from state facilities;  
7 • Pays juvenile detention facilities the  
8 actual costs for housing and serving  
9 lower-risk offenders from the state;  
10 and  
11 • Allows the Department to reinvest  
12 savings or otherwise provides  
13 sufficient, stable funding to  
14 implement a treatment continuum  
15 with more service and treatment  
16 options and supports to ensure better  
17 outcomes and lower recidivism.

## 19 **SOCIAL SERVICES**

### 20 **Family First Prevention Services Act.**

21 Approved by Congress in 2018, the FFPS  
22 Act is the first major revision of the title IV-  
23 E foster care program since the early 1980s.  
24 Changes in the program's requirements and  
25 allowable services will require cooperation  
26 between the state, local governments, and  
27 private service providers to ensure  
28 successful implementation. VML supports  
29 this cooperative effort but opposes any  
30 proposal to impose new local match  
31 requirements to this program.

### 33 **Child and family services program**

34 **improvement plan.** The state must fund the  
35 technology and systems to improve the  
36 quality of all casework activities related to  
37 child welfare services (prevention of child  
38 abuse/neglect; prevention foster care, foster  
39 care and adoption)

41 **Child care.** Affordable, high-quality child  
42 care is crucial to parents in the Temporary  
43 Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)  
44 program and to low-income parents whose  
45 wages simply cannot cover child care costs.  
46 The state must help fund child care costs to

47 help these families. The state should  
48 consider ways to ensure safe, affordable  
49 child care, such as grants for nonprofit or  
50 public organizations offering child care, and  
51 employer incentives to provide child care  
52 centers or other assistance for their  
53 employees.

54  
55 **Healthy families.** VML supports expanded  
56 use of state general funds for the Healthy  
57 Families program, a voluntary program that  
58 offers parental education, support, and  
59 assistance to help prevent the need for  
60 costlier human services and public safety  
61 programs in the future.

62  
63 **Social Services Block Grant.** Virginia uses  
64 Title XX-Social Services Block Grant  
65 (SSBG) funding for a variety of non-cash-  
66 assistance services, including in-home  
67 services for the elderly, child and adult  
68 abuse investigators, and domestic abuse and  
69 family preservation services. Congress has  
70 consistently underfunded the SSBG at the  
71 levels authorized in the 1996 federal welfare  
72 reform law. VML urges Congress to live up  
73 to its commitment to fully fund the SSBG.  
74 Until the federal budget fully funds SSBG,  
75 VML urges the General Assembly to  
76 continue to first use any Temporary  
77 Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)  
78 balances to replace SSBG funds.

## 81 **PARKS & RECREATION**

82 **Recreational programs.** Local parks and  
83 recreation departments offer a variety of  
84 affordable activities and programs for  
85 children, teenagers, and adults. These  
86 programs abide by local health, safety, and  
87 risk-management requirements and are  
88 ultimately accountable to the local  
89 governing body of a city, town, or county.  
90 Efforts to categorize these programs as child  
91 care are inappropriate, and such recreation  
92 programs should not be subject to

1 duplicative state agency regulation and  
2 oversight.

### 3 4 **HEALTH**

5 **Cooperative health budget.** The General  
6 Assembly should provide sufficient funding  
7 to local health departments.

8  
9 **Local flexibility.** District health offices  
10 should be locally controlled to the maximum  
11 extent consistent with protecting public  
12 health.

### 13 14 **MARIJUANA: DECRIMINALIZATION**

15 VML supports a change to the Code of  
16 Virginia to make anyone convicted of the  
17 simple possession of no more than 0.5 oz. of  
18 marijuana for personal use subject to a civil  
19 rather than criminal penalty. Individuals  
20 under 21 years of age found to be in  
21 possession should still be required to  
22 undergo drug screening and participation in  
23 a treatment or education program as a  
24 condition for the suspension of a conviction  
25 if appropriate.

### 26 27 **HEALTH CARE REFORM**

28 Expansion of state Medicaid eligibility will  
29 increase the workload and costs for local  
30 departments of social services, which  
31 perform eligibility determination and  
32 redetermination on behalf of the state. Any  
33 expansion of the caseload must be  
34 accompanied by sufficient, sustained state  
35 funding for staffing and technology to  
36 properly do the job.

37  
38 Imposing work requirements on certain  
39 Medicaid recipients will also increase  
40 workload on local social services staff. The  
41 state must provide sufficient state funding  
42 and technical assistance for local social  
43 services staff who will work with this  
44 population.

45

## 46 **II. EDUCATION**

47 The Virginia Municipal League supports the  
48 goal of ensuring quality, well-funded and  
49 effective teaching in every classroom in the  
50 Commonwealth. Localities have greatly  
51 exceeded their responsibilities for K-12  
52 education funding. It is essential for the state  
53 to meet fully its responsibilities to fund  
54 education.

### 55 56 **VISION**

57 A strong public education system is the  
58 pillar of American society and a passport to  
59 the future. Our country cannot be strong  
60 without an excellent education system that  
61 prepares students for the future with the  
62 critical thinking skills that will enable them  
63 to be productive citizens. A solid foundation  
64 of learning is essential for our communities,  
65 state, and country. A strong public school  
66 system is essential to economic development  
67 and prosperity.

68  
69 A strong educational system requires  
70 accountability; parental, community and  
71 business involvement; and the wise and  
72 efficient use of resources. Standards are an  
73 essential part of the accountability system  
74 but cannot be measured simply by  
75 standardized tests. Students need to learn not  
76 only facts and figures, but also those critical  
77 learning skills that will enable them to leave  
78 high school prepared for either the  
79 workplace or higher education.

80  
81 School safety is a critical issue for every  
82 community. VML supports strong  
83 partnerships and communication between  
84 local police departments and school  
85 divisions and encourages sustained financial  
86 assistance from the state and federal  
87 governments to help school divisions with  
88 safety-related infrastructure, technology, and  
89 personnel. Additionally, VML supports the  
90 work of the special statewide committees  
91 studying student and school safety and

1 encourages continued examination of the  
2 root causes of violence in schools and best  
3 practices to address those causes.  
4  
5 Students, parents, administrators and  
6 teachers all have roles in the educational  
7 system and have to be part of that  
8 accountability system. Parents should be  
9 involved with their children’s education, but  
10 family support for parents is essential,  
11 particularly for those whose children have  
12 behavioral health issues, physical  
13 disabilities, substance abuse disorders or  
14 bullying problems. Not all children should  
15 or need to prepare to attend college, but  
16 students across the economic spectrum  
17 should have equitable opportunities to learn.  
18  
19 A sound education system puts resources  
20 where they can be most effective, includes  
21 collaboration between school boards and  
22 local governing bodies, uses technology  
23 effectively, embraces innovation and  
24 regional opportunities and focuses on early  
25 intervention to tackle problems at the  
26 earliest time possible.

27  
28 **STANDARDS OF QUALITY**

29 The SOQ should be broad enough to include  
30 the major components of what is required  
31 for a quality educational program.  
32

33 The current SOQ do not reflect the cost of a  
34 sound public education system. The SOQ  
35 are not based on prevailing practices, nor do  
36 they reflect the cost of meeting state  
37 accountability standards. Because of this  
38 disconnect between the accountability  
39 standards and the SOQ, the cost that the  
40 state recognizes in its funding formulas is  
41 too low, and too much of the burden of  
42 funding public education falls on local  
43 governments.  
44

45 The state and local governments should  
46 partner to determine the minimum funding

47 levels necessary to sustain high quality  
48 services for schools and other local  
49 government operations while also  
50 addressing capital and maintenance needs.

51  
52 VML supports a JLARC or other state study  
53 that examines the ways other states fund  
54 education and whether the Commonwealth  
55 should use a funding strategy that  
56 establishes a more realistic base foundation  
57 amount per pupil – plus add-on funding to  
58 reflect higher costs for educating at-risk,  
59 disabled, ESL, and gifted students, etc. as  
60 well as funding for capital costs.

61  
62 VML supports a study by the Joint  
63 Legislative Audit and Review Commission  
64 to determine how the SOQ may be revised  
65 and adequately funded to meet the  
66 requirements contained in the Standards of  
67 Learning and Standards of Accreditation.  
68 VML also supports implementation of  
69 JLARC recommendations to promote 3rd  
70 grade reading performance.

71  
72 **SOQ FUNDING**

73 VML supports full funding of the state’s  
74 share of the actual costs of the SOQ based  
75 on prevailing practices, and full funding of  
76 the state’s share of categorical educational  
77 mandates in areas such as special education,  
78 alternative education and gifted education.  
79

80 The state should fully recognize and fund  
81 the costs of rebenchmarking of the various  
82 educational programs including the  
83 Standards of Quality, incentive, categorical,  
84 and school facilities programs. Changing  
85 the process of rebenchmarking to artificially  
86 lower recognized costs does not change  
87 what it actually costs to provide education.  
88 Instead, it simply transfers additional costs  
89 to local governments, and ultimately to the  
90 local real estate tax base.  
91



|    |   |    |   |
|----|---|----|---|
| 1  | The state must be a reliable funding partner  | 47 | the importance of support positions           |
| 2  | in accordance with the Virginia Constitution  | 48 | to achievement on state                       |
| 3  | and state statutes. The Standards of Quality  | 49 | accountability standards. Current             |
| 4  | should recognize resources, including         | 50 | state funding for support positions is        |
| 5  | positions, required for a high-quality public | 51 | not based on prevailing practices or          |
| 6  | education system.                             | 52 | on any scientifically-derived staffing        |
| 7  | Funding for the SOQ should include:           | 53 | ratios.                                       |
| 8  |   | 54 |   |
| 9  | 1. Establishment of a new, predictable        | 55 | 7. Flexibility where possible in areas        |
| 10 | and meaningful source of funding for          | 56 | such as funding of student health             |
| 11 | construction, including funding for           | 57 | services.                                     |
| 12 | new construction, renovation,                 | 58 | 8. Support for funding of                     |
| 13 | maintenance and land purchase. The            | 59 | recommendations made by JLARC                 |
| 14 | Literary Fund and the Virginia                | 60 | to promote reading by grade level by          |
| 15 | Public School Authority are not               | 61 | the third grade.                              |
| 16 | sufficient means for the state to help        | 62 | 9. Development of realistic cost              |
| 17 | localities pay for capital needs.             | 63 | estimates that are based on                   |
| 18 | Options could include creating a              | 64 | prevailing practices and not on the           |
| 19 | two-year pilot program of                     | 65 | availability of state funding.                |
| 20 | competitive grants using funds from           | 66 | 10. Review by JLARC in order that data        |
| 21 | the Virginia Public Building                  | 67 | and information can be provided to            |
| 22 | Authority to offset new construction          | 68 | the State Board of Education on the           |
| 23 | or renovation costs for publicly              | 69 | cost of meeting the SOQ, SOLs and             |
| 24 | owned and operated K-12 schools.              | 70 | SOAs.   |
| 25 | 2. A predictable and reliable source of       | 71 | 11. Lottery funds that are distributed to     |
| 26 | funding for technology infrastructure         | 72 | localities without a corresponding            |
| 27 | and personnel costs.                          | 73 | reduction in direct aid.                      |
| 28 | 3. Realistic state funding for salary         | 74 | The state should not require any              |
| 29 | increases for professional and non-           | 75 | maintenance of local effort other than that   |
| 30 | professional school employees.                | 76 | associated with the SOQ. A maintenance of     |
| 31 | Salary increases should be funded             | 77 | effort requirement that is not connected to   |
| 32 | for a full year starting July 1, the          | 78 | the SOQ will punish those localities that     |
| 33 | start of the fiscal year.                     | 79 | voluntarily spent beyond the required         |
| 34 | 4. State funding to meet the goal of the      | 80 | minimum in an effort to achieve a high-       |
| 35 | Commonwealth (VA Code §22.1-                  | 81 | quality system of education. Further, it will |
| 36 | 289.1) that teacher compensation be           | 82 | simply perpetuate the current mismatch in     |
| 37 | competitive; at a minimum, at or              | 83 | state-local funding for education.            |
| 38 | above national average teacher                | 84 |   |
| 39 | compensation, provided that the true          | 85 | The General Assembly should recognize         |
| 40 | costs of meeting the SOQ are funded           | 86 | that local governments traditionally have     |
| 41 | by the state.                                 | 87 | funded their share of costs of meeting the    |
| 42 | 5. Funding to initiate and continue to        | 88 | SOQ and, in fact, most have funded            |
| 43 | enable school systems to address              | 89 | education beyond their required share in      |
| 44 | school safety issues.                         | 90 | efforts to provide quality education. These   |
| 45 | 6. Recognition of adequate support            | 91 | higher funding levels have meant that         |
| 46 | costs based on realistic measures of          | 92 | localities have had to raise local taxes and  |

1 fees and defer spending on other important  
2 local priorities including public safety.  
3  
4 The local composite index (LCI) is a crude  
5 and often inaccurate proxy for determining  
6 the ability of each locality to pay its share of  
7 K-12 expenses as defined by the SOQ. The  
8 Commonwealth’s education funding  
9 formulae (SOQ and LCI) are more sensitive  
10 to the state’s revenue situation than the  
11 educational needs of Virginia’s students.  
12 VML supports a JLARC or other state study  
13 that examines the ways other states fund  
14 education and whether the Commonwealth  
15 should use a funding strategy that  
16 establishes a more realistic base foundation  
17 amount per pupil – plus add-on funding to  
18 reflect higher costs for educating at-risk,  
19 disabled, ESL, and gifted students, etc.  
20  
21 Because spending increases alone may not  
22 produce desired levels of student  
23 achievement, the State Board of Education  
24 and other responsible bodies are urged to  
25 develop measures of results to determine the  
26 actual effectiveness of expenditures on  
27 education. VML supports the use of school  
28 efficiency reviews to help determine ways to  
29 ensure that public funds are spent as  
30 effectively and efficiently as possible.  
31  
32 VML believes that the methodology for  
33 costing the SOQ does not consider the  
34 differences in costs in the state’s various  
35 regions, nor does it adequately address  
36 unique local conditions such as small, large,  
37 declining, or diverse student populations.  
38 First, the methodology artificially lowers the  
39 state average salary by using the “L-  
40 estimator” instead of average salary figures.  
41 Second, the L-estimator is based on dated  
42 information that does not reflect current  
43 salary levels. Third, the methodology uses  
44 an artificially low limit on the number of  
45 professionals per 1,000 pupils for which  
46 state aid is given. Fourth, the methodology

47 does not address the differences in providing  
48 education to students with special needs or  
49 the heavy additional cost of educating  
50 English as Second Language students. The  
51 add-on funding for at-risk students is a start  
52 toward meeting unique local circumstances  
53 and should be increased.

54  
55 The first priority for the use of a state  
56 surplus should be the funding of mandated  
57 educational programs.

58  
59 Disparity should not be addressed by simply  
60 redistributing existing state aid among  
61 jurisdictions.

62  
63 **LOCAL AUTONOMY**

64 Because public education should be as close  
65 as possible to the people, local school  
66 decisions cannot and should not be made by  
67 the state. Local school boards should be  
68 responsible for the direct supervision and  
69 management of local schools.

70  
71 The state should not take any actions that  
72 limit or reduce authority of local school  
73 boards and local governing bodies to finance  
74 and manage local schools. Local school  
75 boards should retain the responsibility for  
76 approving applications for charter schools.  
77 Otherwise, decisions that affect the funding  
78 of public schools potentially could be made  
79 by a statewide, appointed body that has no  
80 direct connection to the council or board of  
81 supervisors.

82  
83 **ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION**

84 Traditional approaches to discipline—long-  
85 term suspensions and expulsions—transfer  
86 the problems of the student from the school  
87 division to the general government. There  
88 should continue to be school alternatives to  
89 the normal school environment for students  
90 who do not behave appropriately. The state  
91 should develop and fund alternatives,  
92 including workforce development grants, for

1 students suspended and expelled from  
2 school, such as programs designed to  
3 encourage obtainment of GEDs, career  
4 education, job skills, self-control training  
5 and drug and substance prevention. Finally,  
6 there is little effective enforcement of  
7 truancy laws for students who are over 16  
8 years of age. Some of these students have  
9 full time jobs and school divisions have  
10 difficulty in locating them. VML encourages  
11 the development of initiatives to better  
12 enable schools to track these older students,  
13 or otherwise determine if changes are  
14 needed to truancy laws.

15

### 16 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

#### 17 **DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION**

18 Research has shown that the early childhood  
19 years (from infancy to age five) are critical  
20 years for brain development. These early  
21 years are also critical for establishing  
22 healthy lifestyles – eating nutritious foods,  
23 engaging in activities and exercise (i.e.,  
24 playing), and learning basic health and  
25 safety practices.

26

27 Children who are regularly read to and gain  
28 basic language skills, who participate in  
29 healthy activities and learning experiences,  
30 and who learn basic social skills, are more  
31 likely to enter kindergarten ready to learn.  
32 They are also more likely to read at grade  
33 level by the third grade. This early progress  
34 can lead to continued success in school and  
35 ultimately in the workforce.

36

37 VML supports state and local policies and  
38 initiatives that spotlight and encourage  
39 greater early learning opportunities for  
40 children, along with access to information  
41 and resources that will help parents and  
42 caregivers give young children the greatest  
43 chances to learn and grow in healthy ways.  
44 This will ensure a better economic future for  
45 families and communities.

46

47 VML supports increased state funding for  
48 pre-kindergarten students to ensure that all  
49 children entering the public system have the  
50 social and intellectual skills necessary to be  
51 successful students.

52

### 53 **HIGHER EDUCATION**

54 Virginia’s colleges and universities serve as  
55 engines of economic growth, cultural  
56 enrichment, and intellectual development for  
57 communities across the commonwealth.  
58 The decline in state support for institutions  
59 of higher education and the state’s  
60 unwillingness to invest in these institutions  
61 endangers the economic health of the  
62 commonwealth and its cities, towns, and  
63 counties.

64

65 In addition to ensuring a stronger and more  
66 diversified economic base, a healthy and  
67 vibrant higher education sector, which  
68 includes two-year as well as four-year  
69 institutions, supplies our communities with  
70 an educated and well-trained workforce that  
71 attracts new businesses and allows existing  
72 businesses to compete effectively in an  
73 increasingly competitive global economy.  
74 Further, beneficiaries of higher education  
75 tend to earn higher incomes, thus expanding  
76 the revenue stream to the state, and thereby  
77 ensuring the continued provision of quality  
78 services for its citizens. Finally, the  
79 involvement of institutions, their faculty,  
80 and their students in communities across the  
81 commonwealth and the expanded cultural  
82 opportunities these institutions offer  
83 communities enhance the quality of life for  
84 all Virginians.

85

86 Currently, community colleges are required  
87 to offer reduced tuition for high school  
88 students. Local schools, however, are  
89 required to make up the difference in tuition.  
90 This clearly is an unfunded mandate. The  
91 state should find other resources within its

1 higher education budget to pay for the  
2 tuition for these students.  
3  
4 **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**  
5 VML supports innovative approaches,  
6 including creation of satellite campuses, to  
7 ensure that training and certification

8 programs are widely available to high school  
9 students, GED candidates, returning  
10 veterans, and other residents, particularly  
11 those representing underserved and at-risk  
12 populations. Such programs are vital to  
13 prepare Virginians for careers important to  
14 Virginia's economic prosperity.