

# 2024 Legislative Advocacy Update

General Assembly Update for the Richmond City School Board

Presented By: Matthew Stanley, Director, Advocacy & Outreach

Venue: Richmond City School Board Meeting

Date: March 4, 2024

## Session Crossover Headlines

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### The legislature has proposed over \$1 billion in new funding and policy to support K-12 schools.

- Both chambers have proposed increases in teacher compensation, reforms and increased funding of the At-Risk Add-On program, and additional support for English Learner teachers.
- We are excited to see [Virginia's priorities](#) reflected in the budgets and grateful to legislators for advancing these priority investments in public education funding.
- The legislature has passed [SB14](#) and [HB05](#) that allow for local referenda on a 1% sales tax for school construction and [Governor Youngkin now as the power](#) to approve, amend, or veto the bills.

### The Senate budget proposal best supports RPS and eliminates the Great Recession-era support staff cap.

- In addition to the funding of the priorities noted above, the Senate's budget also provides more school construction assistance, fully eliminates the cap on the number of support staff that the state funds, and continues to hold school divisions harmless from the 2022 elimination of the grocery tax. These additional funding policy changes are significant and account for about \$5 million in additional annual funding for RPS as compared to the House budget.

### We must continue to advocate for fully funding public education.

- Due to an increasing Local Composite Index (LCI), the use of one-time funding, and a slight decrease in projected Average Daily Membership (ADM), RPS is still seeing smaller gains in estimated distributions than other localities.
- Our FY24 estimated distribution was \$181.4m, and is now decreasing to \$178.3m. For FY25, the House budget estimates \$173.7m for and the Senate budget estimates \$177.6m for RPS. There is has been no additional funding to support the expiration of federal stimulus packages.
- Many recommendations from the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission's study on K-12 funding have not passed. [A joint committee](#) of the House and Senate is being considered for further legislative recommendations.

## House & Senate Budget Proposals - Estimated RPS Distributions

Proposal	Governor		House		Senate	
	FY25	FY26	FY25	FY26	FY25	FY26
Teacher & Staff Compensation	(1% bonus)	(2%)	\$2.2m (3.385%)	\$4.1m (3.385%)	\$3.4m (3%)	\$3.6m (3%)
At-Risk Add-On	-	-	\$5.7m	\$5.4m	\$4.3m	\$6.4m
EL Ratios	-	-	\$1.9m	\$1.8m	\$0.3m	\$0.3m
Restore .5 LCI Cap for VPI	-	-	\$0.6m	\$0.6m	\$0.6m	\$0.6m
Grocery Sales Tax Hold Harmless	-	-			\$2.8m	\$2.8m
Eliminate Support Staff Cap	-	-			\$2.6m	\$2.6m
Sales Tax Expansion	-	-			\$0.9m	\$2.2m
Estimated RPS Distribution	\$163m	\$164m	\$173.7m	\$176.3m	\$177.6m	\$182.8m

Sources: Virginia Legislative Information System [Budget Site: House](#) and [Senate](#) Committee Reports

Notes:

- All figures represent estimated RPS impact based on VDOE Average Daily Membership projections..
- For a more comprehensive comparison of the House and Senate budgets, [check out this resource](#) from The Commonwealth Institute.

## RPS Advocacy Priorities at Crossover

Priority	House Actions	Senate Actions
Reform the Local Composite Index	<a href="#">HJ67</a> to make recommendations for 2025	No action
Reform the At-Risk Add-On	<a href="#">HB825</a> and <a href="#">budget amendment</a>	<a href="#">SB105</a> and budget amendments increase the <a href="#">add-on percentage</a> and <a href="#">per-pupil distributions</a>
Mental Health Support	<a href="#">HB919</a> and <a href="#">study of flexible funding</a>	No action
200-Day Grants	No action, existing program remains	No action, existing program remains
Supporting English Learners	<a href="#">HB624</a> and <a href="#">proficiency-based ratio funding</a>	<a href="#">SB272</a> (data collection) and <a href="#">reduction in flat ratio</a>
Teacher Compensation	<a href="#">HB187</a> and <a href="#">3.385% raises</a>	<a href="#">Secretary of Education study</a> and <a href="#">3% raises</a>
Support Staff Cap	No action	<a href="#">Elimination of Support Staff Cap</a>
Support Localities in School Construction & Modernization	<a href="#">HB805</a> (allows for local 1% sales tax referenda)	<a href="#">SB14</a> (allows for local 1% sales tax referenda) and budget amendment <a href="#">redirecting Literary Fund for school construction loans</a>

## Advocating for RPS Priorities

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### Email, call, and visit legislators!

- Visit [www.viriniageneralassembly.gov](http://www.viriniageneralassembly.gov) to find legislator contact information. Sample letters are available on the RPS website at [www.rvaschools.net/priorities](http://www.rvaschools.net/priorities).
- In-person visits with legislators and their staff can be very impactful. Consider arranging a group visit to meet with members and share your stories about why investing in public education is so critical.
- Visit [www.viriniageneralassembly.gov](http://www.viriniageneralassembly.gov) for more information and email Matthew Stanley ([mstanley@rvaschools.net](mailto:mstanley@rvaschools.net)) if you need planning assistance.

### Social media can amplify your voice!

- Telling your story and advocating through media is an important part of increasing the impact of your advocacy. Post on social media, write a letters to the editor, or create your own media to share. These are ways to reach a large audience with your message and increase our collective voice.
- Contact the RPS Media Relations team at [mediarelations@rvaschools.net](mailto:mediarelations@rvaschools.net) if you would like help sharing your story!

## Contact the Budget Conferees

The budget conferees are the small group of legislators that will negotiate the final budget - call or email them today to help advocate for the best budget for K-12 education!

- A short and simple letter or phone call to legislators helps amplify our voice as legislators make final decisions that will impact the next two years of education funding.
- Phone calls take less than 2 minutes to express your support for public education funding.
- Emails take less than 10 minutes to briefly share your story and why funding public education is critical.
- Visit [www.rvaschools.net/priorities](http://www.rvaschools.net/priorities) for form letter examples.

Legislator	Phone	Email
Delegate Luke Torian	(804) 698-1024	<a href="mailto:DeLTorian@house.virginia.gov">DeLTorian@house.virginia.gov</a>
Delegate Mark Sickles	(804) 698-1017	<a href="mailto:DelMSickles@house.virginia.gov">DelMSickles@house.virginia.gov</a>
Delegate David Bulova	(804) 698-1011	<a href="mailto:DelDBulova@house.virginia.gov">DelDBulova@house.virginia.gov</a>
Delegate Betsy Carr	(804) 698-1078	<a href="mailto:DelBCarr@house.virginia.gov">DelBCarr@house.virginia.gov</a>
Delegate Terry Austin	(804) 698-1037	<a href="mailto:DelTAustin@house.virginia.gov">DelTAustin@house.virginia.gov</a>
Delegate Robert Bloxom, Jr.	(804) 698-1000	<a href="mailto:DelRBloxom@house.virginia.gov">DelRBloxom@house.virginia.gov</a>
Senator Louise Lucas	(804) 698-7518	<a href="mailto:senatorlucas@senate.virginia.gov">senatorlucas@senate.virginia.gov</a>
Senator Jennifer Boysko	(804) 698-7538	<a href="mailto:senatorboysko@senate.virginia.gov">senatorboysko@senate.virginia.gov</a>
Senator Creigh Deeds	(804) 698-7511	<a href="mailto:senatordeeds@senate.virginia.gov">senatordeeds@senate.virginia.gov</a>
Senator Mamie Locke	(804) 698-7523	<a href="mailto:senatorlocke@senate.virginia.gov">senatorlocke@senate.virginia.gov</a>
Senator Todd Pillion	(804) 698-7506	<a href="mailto:senatorpillion@senate.virginia.gov">senatorpillion@senate.virginia.gov</a>

# RPS 2024 Legislative Advocacy Priorities

## Advocate with us!

For more information on RPS legislative advocacy priorities, resources and prior updates, please visit our website at [www.rvaschools.net/priorities](http://www.rvaschools.net/priorities).

## Email Updates

[Sign up](#) for email updates about legislative action and opportunities to advocate!

## Form Letters

Find sample letters to edit and email to legislators [here!](#)



### 2024 Legislative Advocacy Priorities

ACT NOW TO ADVOCATE FOR RICHMOND PUBLIC SCHOOLS!

The best way to show love for our kids is by advocating for RPS to get the support and funds it needs to provide an amazing education.

Your voice is critical during the General Assembly session in January and February. Phone, email, and legislative visits are all great and accessible ways to get involved. RPS has six legislative priorities, and your perspective will help our lawmakers understand why kids need them... For more information and resources to support advocacy, visit the RPS website at [rvaschools.net/advocacy](http://rvaschools.net/advocacy).

 Find your legislators and their contact information on the Virginia General Assembly website at [virginiageneralassembly.gov](http://virginiageneralassembly.gov).

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**Priority 1 — Reform the Local Composite Index**

Richmond faces budget challenges despite the city becoming richer. The latest state analysis suggests Richmond should pay for 57.4% of school costs, leading to less money from the state. A recent report suggests a fairer way to calculate education costs, using a three-year average, which could mean more money for Richmond schools. Families supporting this change could mean more funding for Richmond schools and ensure kids have what they need to learn.

LOCAL COMPOSITE INDEX (LCI)

The state's formula for calculating how much money Richmond should pay for Richmond Public Schools.

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**Priority 2 — Reform the At-Risk Add On**



Recent findings shed light on a concerning funding gap for RPS's economically disadvantaged students, and the existing funding program falls short of addressing their educational needs. Families should support adopting the federally approved **Identified Student Percentage** measure for precise calculations, which includes consolidating existing programs into a **new At-Risk Program under the Standards of Quality**, which could yield a substantial **\$250 million infusion** in additional aid.

**Priority 3 — Strategically Support Extending Stimulus-Funded Investments**




Federal COVID funds have helped schools hire **mental health staff**, but this support is ending. Schools may have to cut these positions when we know our students need more mental health support now. Additionally, the General Assembly should provide funds for a **grant program to aid schools facing high community violence**.

Additional **instructional** time is a proven strategy for recovering from learning loss. Based on the preliminary success of the RPS200 program, the General Assembly should **expand the extended-year grant program**, which provides funding to support schools interested in adopting a **200-day calendar**.

**Priority 4 — Supporting All English Learners (ELs)**

**IMPLEMENT PROFICIENCY-BASED RATIOS FOR ENGLISH LEARNER TEACHERS**

Virginia needs to better support English Learners. The current ratio of having one teacher for every 50 EL students isn't equitable or fair because **students have different needs**. Changing the law so each teacher has a number of students **based on their English proficiency** would make a big difference, especially for our Newcomer students, who are learning English for the first time.

The EL teacher ratio **should be amended** from 20 positions per 1,000 EL students (1 per 50) to a **sliding scale**.

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

LEVEL 1

LEVEL 2

LEVEL 3

LEVEL 4

STUDENT RATIO

one position  
per 25  
students


one position  
per 30  
students

one position  
per 40  
students

one position  
per 50  
students


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**Priority 5 — Invest in Teachers and Support Staff**



**ELIMINATE THE SUPPORT-STAFF CAP**

Since the Great Recession in 2009, there's been a cap on state-funded support staff like nurses and social workers. These staff members are **crucial for helping students facing challenges**, and we currently fund some of these positions without any state support. The General Assembly has started undoing this unfair cap, but should undo it completely to restore the funding for these critical staff.




**INVEST IN TEACHER AND STAFF COMPENSATION**

Compared to other states, **Virginia's teacher salaries are not very competitive**. RPS has worked to increase pay, and the state has improved teachers' ability to negotiate, but **we still need help from the state to pay our staff fairly**. Virginia is also facing a shortage of school staff. To catch up to the national average for teacher pay, **we need to increase salaries by about 10 percent**. The General Assembly should keep working towards this goal.


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**Priority 6 — Support Localities in School Construction and Modernization**




**LET VOTERS FUND MODERN FACILITIES**

With about **\$25 billion in documented needs** statewide, we need the state to keep helping us build and update safe, modern buildings. We're asking the General Assembly to let us have an **optional 1% Local Sales Tax for school construction**. This means we can ask voters to increase the sales tax by 1 percent, and the money will go to building and updating schools.




**FUND SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION GRANTS**

Given the state's infrastructure needs, we need the General Assembly to add **\$2.5 billion to the School Construction Grant and Assistance Program**. This includes \$500 million for direct grants in the **School Construction Grant Program** and \$2 billion for competitive grants in the **School Construction Assistance Program**.



For more updates and resources, visit the RPS website at [rvaschools.net/advocacy](http://rvaschools.net/advocacy).



# The Richmond Legislative Delegation

## Senators



Lamont Bagby  
District 14



Ghazala Hashmi  
District 15

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- ★ [Senate District Map](#)
- ★ [House District Map](#)
- ★ [Virginia General Assembly](#)
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## Delegates



Betsy Carr  
District 78



Rae Cousins  
District 79



Michael Jones  
District 77