

# Legislative Advocacy Update

Virginia General Assembly Update for the Richmond City School Board

Presented By: Matthew Stanley, Director, Advocacy & Outreach

Venue: Richmond City School Board Work Session

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## House & Senate Budget Proposal Comparison

Key Proposals	Base	Introduced		House		Senate	
	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY27	FY28	FY27	FY28
One-Time Bonus ( <i>HB29/FY26</i> ) <i>RPS Distribution</i>		-	-	\$1500 \$1.65m	-	\$1500 \$1.65m	-
Salary Raise <i>RPS Distribution</i>		2% \$1.8m	2% \$3.6m	2% \$1.8m	2% \$3.6m	3% \$2.7m	3% \$5.4m
Flexible Per-Pupil Funding <i>RPS Distribution</i>		-	-	\$400.4m <sup>^</sup> \$7.6m*	-	-	\$60m \$798k
At-Risk Add-On <i>RPS Distribution</i>		-	-	<sup>^</sup>	-	\$49.4m <sup>†</sup> \$1.9m	\$79.4m <sup>†</sup> \$2.7m
Special Ed Add-On <sup>‡</sup> <i>RPS Distribution</i>		-	-	\$74.4m \$735k	\$74m \$736k	\$12.8m \$134k	\$12.8m \$134k
Sales Tax Update (Data Center Exemption Expiration) <i>RPS Distribution</i>		-	-	-	-	\$46.7m \$1.1m	\$114.7m \$2.8m
School Construction Assistance Program		\$274m	\$25m	\$172m	\$172m	\$274m	\$25m
Estimated RPS Distribution Based on projected ADM of 20,318	\$187.8m	\$200.1m	\$203.6m	\$208.5m	\$204.3m	\$204.4m	\$212.1m

Data Sources: [LIS State Budget Committee Reports](#), [Senate Finance & Appropriations Committee](#), and the [26-28 Introduced Budget](#)

Notes:

<sup>^</sup> Out of the House's \$400m flexible funding, \$100m is distributed per the At-Risk Add-On formula.

\* The House's flexible funding does not require a local match – but is contingent on providing the salary raise.

<sup>†</sup> At-Risk Add-On Details: The Senate increased the add-on to a max percentage of 39.9% in the first year and 52.1% in the second year.

<sup>‡</sup> Special Education Add-On Increases: House - Level I: 4.75% to 9.25%, Level II: 5.25% to 17.5%. Senate - Level I: 4.75% to 5.75%, Level II: 5.25% to 5.75%.

# House & Senate Budget Proposal Comparison

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## Additional House Amendments

- Support for Joint Subcommittee on Elementary and Secondary Education Funding – [\\$250k first year](#)
- Employee Child Care Assistance Program (SB3 and HB18) – [\\$25m first year](#)
- Regional Alternative Education Programs – [Language Only Amendment](#) to direct “the Department of Education to consider the number of slots each school division applied for when distributing slots for Regional Alternative Education.”

## Additional Senate Amendments

- Joint Subcommittee on Elementary and Secondary Education Funding – [\\$1.25m total](#)
- Employee Child Care Assistance Program (SB3 and HB18) – [\\$25m per year](#)
- Community Schools Development and Implementation Planning Grants – [\\$2.5m per year](#)
- AI Pilot Program (SB 394) - [\\$2m per year](#)
- Richmond Teacher Residency - [\\$750k per year](#)
- 1% Sales Tax - [Language Only](#)

## Key Updates — School Construction & Modernization

### Our Ask: Renew the Commission on School Construction and Modernization.

The Commission, created to assess school facility needs and recommend funding solutions, is set to expire in 2026. The General Assembly should reauthorize it to continue its work supporting localities with data, technical assistance, and equitable funding recommendations. Reauthorizing the Commission will ensure Virginia continues to make progress in addressing its \$25+ billion backlog in school infrastructure needs.

- [HB544](#) (Askew) and [SB498](#) (Aird) eliminate the Commission's expiration date and require it to create a 10-year capital roadmap to address statewide school construction needs. Both bills have passed the chambers of origin uncontested.

### Our Ask: Let voters fund modern facilities.

The General Assembly should once again approve legislation allowing localities to hold referenda for a 1% local sales tax dedicated solely to school construction and modernization. This measure, which passed twice with bipartisan support before being vetoed, gives communities a local tool to fund urgently needed school improvements while maintaining voter oversight and accountability.

- [HB334](#) (Rasoul) passed the House 70-28 and the Senate has included amendment [4-14 #1s](#) in their budget proposal.

### Our Ask: Fund per-pupil infrastructure grants.

The 2022 school construction package provided a one-time per-pupil allocation for infrastructure improvements across Virginia. This approach helped local divisions like Richmond make critical repairs and upgrades. We ask the General Assembly to reinstate this program with a minimum statewide appropriation of \$500 million, ensuring that every student learns in a safe, modern, and well-equipped school.

- Delegate Cousins introduced budget amendment [Item 125 #3h](#) was incorporated into the House budget proposal with [\\$400 million in flexible funding](#).

## Key Updates — Reform Virginia’s K–12 Funding Formula

### Our Ask: Implement JLARC recommendations.

In 2023, JLARC found that Virginia underfunds K–12 education by over \$3 billion annually and recommended transitioning to a student-based funding model. The General Assembly should implement these recommendations to ensure funding reflects student need rather than outdated staffing formulas.

- [HB92](#) (Delegate Rasoul) was scaled back from its introduced version to codify the At-Risk Add-On and Special Education Add-On programs. It awaits consideration by the Senate.
- The [House](#) and [Senate](#) included funding in their budget to support the writing of a new K-12 funding formula by the Joint Subcommittee for Elementary & Secondary Education funding.

### Our Ask: Reform the Local Composite Index (LCI).

Richmond’s LCI continues to overstate the city’s ability to pay for schools, resulting in less state support. JLARC recommended reforms to the LCI, including using a multi-year average of income, property, and sales data to smooth volatility and better reflect fiscal reality. Adopting these changes would direct more equitable funding to localities like Richmond.

- All LCI related legislation was referred to the Joint Subcommittee on Elementary and Secondary Education Funding. We expect the subcommittee to begin meeting after session concludes.

### Our Ask: Increase the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT).

Virginia’s localities provide services to many state-owned properties that are exempt from local taxes. Increasing the state’s PILOT contributions would help offset the true cost of those services and ease the burden on local taxpayers while supporting critical public education functions.

- While changes to the PILOT were not advanced this session, we are encouraged by the House and Senate budget proposals that will support Richmond’s infrastructure needs and will continue advocacy on the PILOT for next session.

## Key Updates — Strengthen Student Mental Health Supports

### Our Ask: Increase specialized support staff ratios.

Students are facing greater mental health challenges than ever. The General Assembly should increase the Standards of Quality ratio for specialized student support staff—such as school counselors, social workers, psychologists, and nurses—to at least four per 1,000 students. This investment will ensure that every school has the staff needed to address student well-being and reduce barriers to learning.

- [HB195](#) (McQuinn) and [SB33](#) (Favola) would provide more flexibility to use At-Risk Add-On funding to support initiatives to support both the physical and mental health of students in public schools, including the hiring of registered nurses and advanced practice registered nurses. Both bills have advanced favorably and are expected to pass.

### Our Ask: Support telehealth expansion and Medicaid alignment.

By investing in telehealth infrastructure and improving Medicaid billing processes, the state can help schools connect more students to licensed mental health professionals. This approach is cost-effective, sustainable, and critical for divisions with limited local mental health resources.

- [SB73](#) (Srinivasan) was amended to require the Department of Medical Assistance Services to provide additional training to school division staff regarding Medicaid billing for reimbursable services rendered at school sites.

### Our Ask: Expand community-based partnerships.

Virginia can rapidly expand access to mental health services by creating a Community-Based Partnership Grant Program that funds collaborations between school divisions and local mental health providers. These partnerships will enhance access to care, reduce wait times, and connect students to licensed professionals who can serve them within their schools.

- Funding for community schools development and implementation planning grants [was included in the Senate budget](#).

## Recent Advocacy Activities

### Love at the Center

#### Student Voice at the Center

For the fourth consecutive year, RPS students have walked into the Virginia General Assembly not as observers, but as advocates.

Through RPS' Advocacy Day, organized by **Director of Advocacy & Outreach Matthew Stanley**, students meet face-to-face with lawmakers to share their experiences on how decisions affect students. It's one of the clearest reflections of our commitment to Love at the Center: not speaking for students, but creating space for them to speak for themselves.

And when they do, they speak with clarity.



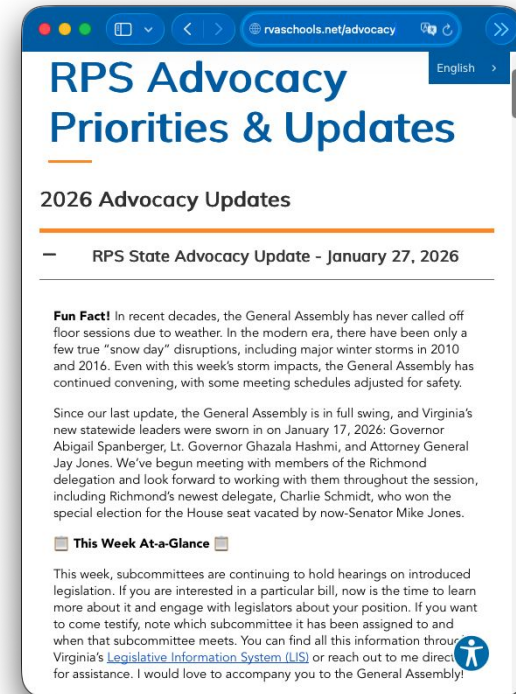
# Upcoming Timeline & Key Advocacy Opportunities

## March 2026

- Next Week: Conference budget reported
- March 14: Session adjourns

## April 2026

- April 13: Governor's deadline to veto or amend passed legislation
- April 21: Special Election – Constitutional Amendment
- April 22: Reconvened Session (also known as “Veto Session”)



For email updates with advocacy opportunities, form letters, and more information, please sign up for our advocacy email list!

