

I'm writing in concern about the implementation of equity math.

My first thought when I heard the term "equity math" was they think low-income kids are stupid and they're trying to dumb everything down for them. I understand the knee jerk reaction of wanting kids to feel equal and not feel different because they are not as smart as another student. However, most kids start out on an equal footing. What they are introduced to effects how "smart" they are. When kids are going to an in-home daycare instead of a learning center, of course they are starting out at a disadvantage. Having an even playing field is not the answer. More resources need to be given to those fundamental years where kids are learning how to read and first introduce to math.

When my daughter was in 1st grade she had trouble reading. The teacher suggested we read to her every night. This was not working. We hired a substitute teacher that does tutoring on the side - that didn't help. We ultimately found Huntington Learning Center. Her teacher thought this was a waste of our money because this type of tutoring didn't help her other students that had went to Sylvian Learning Center. We knew we had to do something. As expensive as it was, we went into debt to send our daughter to Huntington. Unlike the tutoring, the reading at night, and Sylvian; Huntington assessed my daughter on what she didn't know and concentrated their efforts on those problem areas only. The teacher was so impressed by the turnaround, she started referring other parents to the program.

Not all students learn the same. Unfortunately, the teachers don't have the time and can't teach the subject matter in multiple ways. That is where the education system fails the students. If they get it, great. If they don't get it, oh well, the teacher must move on because they don't have the time to give the kids one on one time. If the child doesn't understand the concept when it is first taught to them, then they are going to have difficulty for the rest of their lives. Currently some kids are pulled from class and are sent to a gifted session for advanced learning and critical thinking skills. How about pulling kids out of class or providing them with an after school programs to teach them the same subject matter, just in a different way. If they're not doing well, then it's obvious they are not understanding something.

When my daughter was taking Algebra, she had the hardest time. Thankfully, I love Algebra. When she showed me how the teacher taught her how to solve the problems, I was lost. I showed her how I was taught, and she immediately caught on to it. The light bulb came on and she's been soaring ever since.

Those two simple steps that we took to help our daughter has made her an honor role student. Unfortunately not everyone has the ability to send their kids to expensive tutoring, or the knowledge to help them.

Equity math should not be implemented to bring the advanced kids down to the other kids level. Equity math or just Equity education, should be to give more help to kids to bring them UP to the level of the advanced kids. The advanced kids are not smarter. They were provided with more

resources than the other kids. Their parents helped them, pushed them to study, or paid for effective tutoring. Not all kids have those resources. Provide these resources to the kids that don't have them and you'll see how they'll rise. Help raise the kids to the next level. Don't keep the other kids from soaring.

The U.S. is already behind in STEM. This is just going to increase the gap and keep our kids from competing against others around the world.

Please don't implement equity math. There are other ways to help those that need help in this area.

Linda Singleton

Dear Mr. Daniel A. Gecker, President
State Board of Education

You have been challenged in many ways this last year in honoring your responsibility to educate our young citizens for the adulthood they will enter.

However, we are now challenged by an “adulthood” that is remarkably different from earlier decades. There are obvious reasons why so many adults today believe the election was stolen (1), vaccinations are harmful (2), Democrats are pedophiles (3), Antifa had a role in the Capitol attack (4), astronauts never went to the moon (5), mass shootings were staged (6), homeopathy heals (7), and astrology reveals. (8)

We need look no further than the Internet. The Internet has created “a world where people of all races and creeds and nationalities can share ideas and communicate freely,” but it also disseminates disinformation, falsehoods, unsubstantiated theories, and ludicrous claims more readily than truth, facts, and well-founded science. (9)

Only a tiny proportion of school districts have prioritized teaching students how to navigate the Internet world of echo chambers, rabbit holes of conspiracy theories, and claims, advertisements, and vacuous promises all individually engineered through the use of each student’s individual browsing history.

For a detailed discussion on rising to this challenge, please refer to: <https://cogito.blog/an-undertaught-element-of-critical-thinking/>

Respectfully,

David Almandsmith
Former Secondary Teacher, Retired

VDOE,

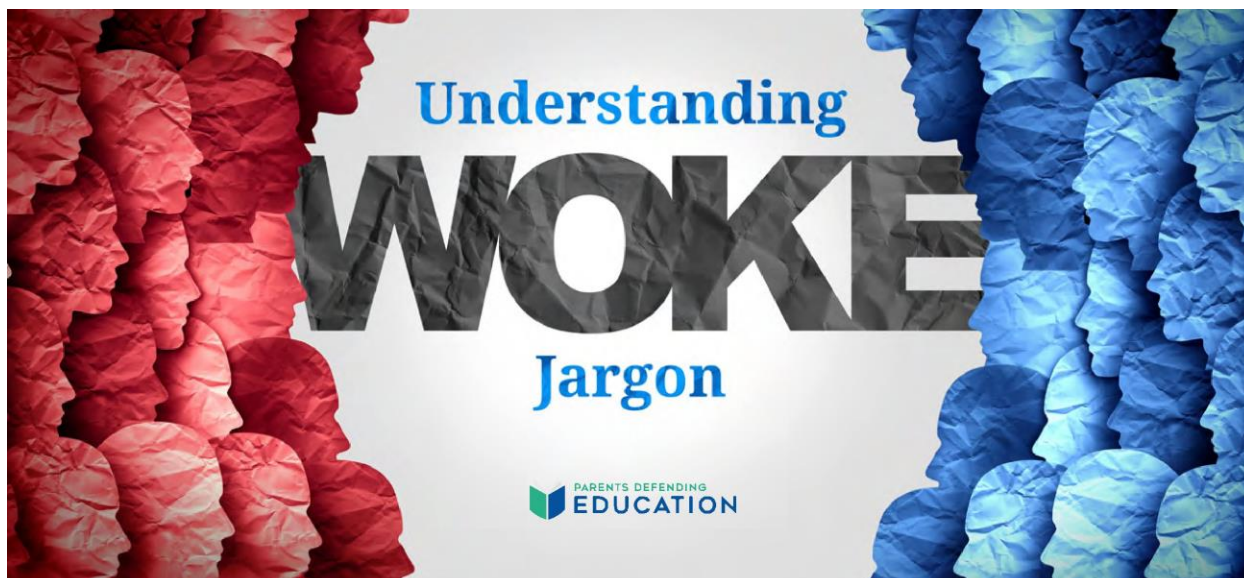
I couldn't be more concerned about the changes proposed as a part of VDOE's VMPI. I have no issues with beefing up the unaccelerated core math curriculum. However, these changes should not come at the cost of the accelerated pathway. Not allowing students to take advanced classes early in their education will limit the realization of their potential relative to their peers in private or other state schools. This will leave our children at a distinct disadvantage when competing to get into STEM colleges relative to students whose schools offer access to more advanced math curriculum. Additionally, under the proposed VMPI, advanced students will undoubtedly graduate with a reduced exposure to advanced mathematical concepts (can only take advanced math courses in their 11th and 12th grade years). This will make it extremely difficult to meet expectations in high grade STEM colleges and reduce the probability for student success post high school. Why in the world would VDOE take such steps when STEM fields make up the majority of high paying jobs in today's economy? VDOE should be expanding its advanced math offerings, not limiting them.

On a separate note, the proposed elimination of the Advanced Studies Diploma also makes zero sense. Based on the YouTube session I watched, I saw no objective reason offered for its elimination. Rather, the inference that disparities in who was earning the advanced studies diploma among racial lines was the only reason implicitly stated for its removal. Why would VDOE pursue a policy that limits the ability of students to differentiate themselves in a positive way to colleges and future employers? Such a change would make it hard for all races to secure follow on education or employment relative to the status quo and private / other state schools who do offer such differentiation. Once again, what is VDOE thinking?

Our economy has shifted significantly over the past few decades in favor of STEM fields. Why VDOE would pursue any path that would limit, rather than expand access to advanced math classes and enable students to set themselves apart relative to their peers makes zero sense. If VDOE removes the advanced math track, we will be forced to move our children to private schools, or move to another state. As a product of the Virginia public school system I was always proud of the education I received. Primarily due to the advanced tracks that I was afforded in addition to the ability to attend college courses during high school through agreements with local universities. Unfortunately, I fear those opportunities will not be available for my children thanks to the current direction VDOE is taking our public schools.

Elimination of advanced math tracks, advanced studies diplomas, and a continuous focus on race and identity rather than individual academic achievement will only make Virginia public schools, and the education its students receive, less competitive in today's economy. This is such an unfortunate development given the prior opportunity Virginia public schools used to offer. A change of direction is desperately needed and I couldn't be more disappointed with the current actions being taken by the VDOE.

- Lee
Disappointed Parent



School activists employ an array of new words and phrases to describe their beliefs and goals. If you hear many of these phrases and can't figure out what they mean, that's because it's by design. This vocabulary is intended to mislead - to make harmful and extreme ideas sound admirable and to conceal meaning through ambiguity.

Below is a guide to the actual meaning - in plain language - of the most common words and phrases you're hearing from education activists at your school. If you want to get involved in combating the school revolution, one of the first things you must do is understand what the activists really mean. Here's our handy guide:

Antiracism:

This phrase should never be confused with anti-racism, or opposition to discriminating against people based on their race. Everyone should be opposed to racism. "Antiracism" is an Orwellian phrase whose meaning is the exact opposite of how it sounds.

To be an "antiracist" you must agree that our society, in every aspect, is racist and that the remedy is to embrace sweeping new forms of racial discrimination.

Schools frequently assign the book "How to be an Antiracist" written by activist and writer Ibram X. Kendi. Kendi [writes](#) that "the most threatening racist movement is...the regular American's drive for a 'race-neutral'" society. Kendi has [admitted](#) what "antiracism" really means in practice: "The only remedy to past discrimination is present discrimination.

The only remedy to present discrimination is future discrimination." In other words, supporting "antiracism" actually means supporting racism — discriminating against people based on the color of their skin.

“Antiracism” is incredibly destructive to our schools and communities. Its goal is to separate people into racial identity groups and then encourage feelings of shame, guilt, anger, and resentment toward the other groups. It divides our kids and our society into good people and bad people.

The good people are those who publicly devote themselves to supporting “antiracist” demands.

The bad people are not just those who commit acts of actual racism, but those who retain the belief — articulated so beautifully by Martin Luther King Jr — of “judging people not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.”

In other words, whether you’re a racist no longer depends on your actions. It depends on whether you unquestioningly obey the demands of “antiracist” activists.

Equity:

This word is commonly understood to mean fairness or justice, but it is now used by activists to mean something much more specific: *equality of outcomes* between different racial groups.



When you hear activists demand “equity,” what they’re actually saying is that the basic American value of equality of opportunity — that the rules should apply equally to everyone, regardless of race — is racist, because equality of opportunity doesn’t always produce equality of *results*. The solution is “equity,” or attempting to achieve equality of results through racial discrimination.

An example of “equity” is the adoption by elite universities of quotas that deny admission to highly-qualified Asian students in order to reduce the proportion of Asians in the student body, regardless of academic merit.

Critical Race Theory:

This is an academic term for a set of beliefs about race in America. We suggest reading [this article](#) for more information on it. All of the terms in this guide are important building blocks of CRT, so by reading them you will gain a useful understanding of this theory’s overall doctrine and goals.

Systemic Racism or Structural Racism:

Under Critical Race Theory, systemic racism is the *only* permissible explanation for differences in outcomes between racial groups. The concept of “systemic racism” is intended to be hard to pin down: If you ask how a “system” — as opposed to individual people and their individual actions — can be racist, you will not get a coherent answer. Accusing our entire society of structural racism is part of a strategy that seeks to justify radical, destructive political changes. If everything is racist, then everything must be torn down.

Social Justice:

This phrase is cleverly designed to make radical political views sound non-political and virtuous. You’re not opposed to justice, are you? Because that would make you a supporter of *injustice*. The phrase itself has no concrete meaning, which is part of why it is so useful.

If you hear school officials or teachers advocating “social justice,” it is important to ask them what *specifically* they mean — and if they believe that anyone who disagrees is an advocate for injustice.

Microaggression:

This word is defined by activists as an interaction between people of different races, cultures, or genders in which a member of a “victim group” is subjected to subtle but powerful attack — ones the attacker is unaware he or she is carrying out.

Legitimizing the concept of “microaggressions” serves several important political goals for radical activists: It puts *everyone* in the “oppressor” racial and gender categories on the defensive, since you can be guilty of “aggression” based entirely on someone else’s say-so. And crucially, encouraging kids to think in terms of “microaggressions” encourages them to be emotionally fragile, to embrace a grievance mindset, and to think of themselves as either oppressors or victims. These are all important political-psychological goals of woke activists.



Implicit Bias or Implicit Association:

This is a theory — [unsupported by research](#) — that every person is secretly racist, even if that person doesn't feel racist, act racist, or believe in treating people differently based on race.

A new trend in schools is administering an "Implicit Bias Test" where students are asked to quickly associate negative or positive words with pictures of people of different races. These discredited "tests" are designed to prove that *everyone* is racist. They are emotionally manipulative pseudoscience and if your school is using them, you should protest vigorously.

White Fragility:

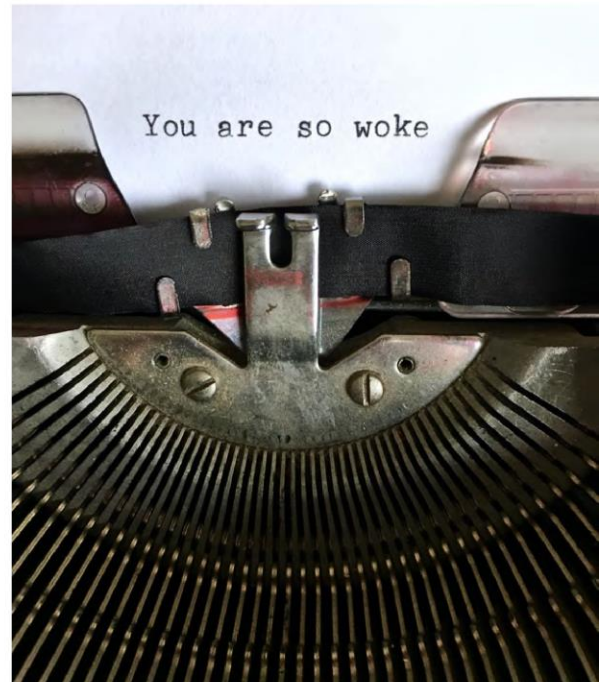
One of the core beliefs of Critical Race Theory is that all white people are racist, whether they think they are or not.

But how should activists handle white people who do not believe they are racist? Instead of trying to convince them using facts and evidence, it can be effective to attack their character. That's where "white fragility" comes in.

If a white person denies being racist, or becomes defensive or upset when accused of "privilege" or racism, or rejects any aspect of Critical Race Theory, he or she will

be accused of "fragility." It's not that they disagree — it's that they're too emotionally weak to accept the truth.

This is an incredibly cynical way of avoiding a real discussion and simply attacking someone's character in the hope of putting them on the defensive.



Dear Virginia Board of Education,

I am very much opposed to a self-proclaimed gendered student having the ability to choose a bathroom or locker room of their choice. As a female, I would feel extremely unsafe and uncomfortable with a natural-born male walking into the girl's bathroom or locker room. If a student has decided to change their gender, they can use a private unisex bathroom. You have to use common sense in order to weigh the consequences of any decision. Which is more important? The safety of our female students, or the possible social stigma of using a unisex bathroom for a very small number of students?

Please consider the possibility that many of these changes may be created with good intentions, but ultimately hurt our children's educational environment. Does anyone remember the educational movement of the late 60's and early 70's where school buildings were built with open classrooms? Examples of school buildings influenced by this movement are Lake Braddock Secondary School in Burke, VA, and Woodridge High School in Prince William County. These schools were built with fewer walls so students could wander and sit down and listen to other classes depending on their interests. Do you know what this great intention led to? It resulted in students being distracted by what was going on in other classrooms because the walls were not there to lessen the sound of the class next to them or across from them. It made it harder for the students to concentrate and teachers would sometimes feel the need to ask their coworker to please keep it down because their class was trying to take a test. Do you know what has happened to the buildings since then? When they are up for renovation, they put back all of the walls.

Please do not put my daughter and the daughters of many parents in this state at risk for sexual harassment or sexual assault by allowing male-born students to use female locker rooms or bathrooms.

Respectfully,
Heather Gilley
Parent of LCPS children

Hello, I am not even from Virginia, but I came across the article about the teacher that lost his job for not using the preferred pronouns at school. I am understanding this is an elementary school?

I am just trying to understand why your school systems are forcing these ideas to children at such a young impressionable age? Just think if this please:

A child who self identifies as a boy sees another boy calling himself a girl at school and because of this the boy now wants to be called a girl for reasons he can not explain. You would just allow and nurture this in a school or would you correct the child if they had no reason why they wanted to be a girl.

All I'm saying is that what you are pushing at the public schools will spread like a weed in these children's minds. They will get confused and won't understand what they should be. Let them be who God created them to be. A boy or a girl. These types of choices should be made with an adult "mind" not a baby mind.

If your child wanted to change genders because they see their peers doing it would you support and nurture this? Would you allow your child to freely and willingly be influenced by this? Would you see this as them coming to the light about "who they truly are"

With all due respect, I see the reasons behind why you are trying to implement this, but it's being done to people that are way too young and way too early. This will become a major problem soon amongst our kids when you realize this it will be too late.

Transgender student preferred pronouns was created by adults because it is an adult choice and should be used for adults only.

Dear House and Senate Appropriations Leadership, Deputy Burcher, Assistant Superintendent Coy, President Gecker, Superintendent Lane, Secretary Layne, Legislative Director Neff, and Secretary Qarni,

I write on behalf of the Fund Our Schools Coalition to submit our memorandum on our recommendations for uses of the state portion of funds from the American Rescue Plan (see attached). The memorandum comprises a set of investments that we believe would best serve students who have faced the most barriers to education during the pandemic, and would be realistic to implement given the restricted uses and timeframe for obligation of the funds.

Our top four recommendations that the coalition believes are essential to invest in with the state portion of federal aid include:

- Invest in school-based wraparound and support services
- Create and fully fund the Equity Fund
- Maximize allowable general school infrastructure support
- Invest in broadband access and affordability

We also include in the memorandum a larger set of additional recommendations that we ask you to consider further investments in. For each recommendation, we include our thoughts on implementation and reasoning for the suggested investment.

We would be more than happy to set up a conversation between any members of our coalition and your office to discuss these recommendations further or answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our coalition's recommendations,

Chad Stewart

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Chad Stewart
Manager, Education Policy and Development
The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis
chad@thecommonwealthinstitute.org

Attachment



Memorandum

To: Kathy Burcher, Deputy Secretary of Education
Holly Coy, Assistant Superintendent for Policy, Equity, and Communications
Dan Gecker, President, Virginia Board of Education
Senator Janet Howell, Chair, Senate Finance Committee
Dr. James Lane, Superintendent of Public Instruction
The Honorable Aubrey Layne, Secretary of Finance
Missy Neff, Legislative Director for Governor Ralph Northam
The Honorable Atif Qarni, Secretary of Education
Delegate Luke Torian, Chair, House Appropriations Committee

From: Fund Our Schools Coalition

Date: June 10, 2021

Re: K-12 Budgetary Requests in Response to the American Rescue Plan

Purpose

We write this memorandum as Fund Our Schools (FOS), a coalition with 18 signatory organizations representing grassroots organizing, advocacy, policy, research and other community organizations, to share our collective recommendations for usage of discretionary state funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP).

Thank you for your work to continually respond to the ever-evolving education landscape in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and changing federal support and guidance. Fund Our Schools appreciates many aspects of the balanced approach VDOE, lawmakers, and the administration have taken to provide guidance and resources to schools during this time, with a strong commitment to equity and directing resources to students and schools most in need.

With an unprecedented amount of one-time funding coming to Virginia from ARP, in conjunction with the extensive guidance recently released by the U.S. Treasury Department on allowable uses of these funds, Fund Our Schools has consulted with our wide network of students, educators, parents, and community advocates to develop a list of recommended appropriations of the State Fiscal Recovery Fund dollars. Based on our assessment, we believe these recommendations will best serve students who have been most harmed by the negative impacts of the pandemic, will help set schools on a path for a more equitable future, and are allowable based on Treasury guidelines. We know you have likely been speaking with and hearing from a variety of stakeholders around the state, and we welcome a dialogue with your offices on these recommendations and your ideas to maximize ARP funds.

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Our View on a General Approach and Context for Investing ARP in K-12

While ARP funding offers an opportunity to recover from some of the immediate impacts of the pandemic, its temporary provisions are not enough to meet the needs of Virginia's students either in the short or long term. One recent study suggests that it may take an additional investment of roughly \$10,000 per student over the span of five years to make up for lost learning time during the pandemic in divisions with high concentrations of students living in poverty, Black and Latino/x students, and English Learners. This amount would far exceed the federal support that divisions are receiving via ARP. There is also mounting evidence from assessment platforms that students

with disabilities have seen substantial setbacks from lost learning time. Additionally, an equitable long-term recovery solution will require the Commonwealth to provide new ongoing support to divisions with a high share of students from historically marginalized backgrounds. Virginia has historically under-resourced and, at times, deliberately disinvested in such students and communities through sanctioned segregation.

We do not view this one-time ARP investment as a solution to Virginia's K-12 funding problems, but rather as a springboard for making critical investments we've always needed in our schools. In fact, Virginia still has not fulfilled its own state constitutional obligation to fully fund the Standards of Quality prescribed by the Board of Education. The springboard provided by the ARP must be supplemented over the next couple years. This is our best chance at making these investments truly transformative--we can correct for past inequities and build back stronger so all Virginia students have a chance to thrive.

Top Fund Our Schools Budget Priorities for State Funding in ARP

Our coalition has identified four major priorities for investment of ARP state discretionary funding: **(1) school-based wraparound and support services, (2) creating and fully investing in the Equity Fund, (3) allowable general school infrastructure support, and (4) broadband access and affordability.** We believe investing in these four critical areas will prioritize attending to students who have been most negatively impacted by the pandemic, and lay the groundwork for sustainable infrastructure and service models that will outlast the one-time ARP funding.

Below are several categories with specific investments Fund Our Schools believes are needed to adequately respond to student and community needs and rebuild equitably. Our recommendations are directed at the state response with State Fiscal Recovery Fund and Elementary and Secondary School Education Act (ESSER) III (state-set-aside) dollars, in addition to existing resources. We acknowledge several of these state investments could be further leveraged by Local Fiscal Recovery Fund and school division ESSER III funds.

1. School-Based Wraparound and Support Services

Community Schools Models

Investing in school-based social services is critical to address significant health and other environmental factors that can affect a student's education and ability to succeed in school. Many students have experienced new forms of trauma during the pandemic, and the state has broad latitude to invest ARP funds in services like tutoring, food access and mental health support. An efficient and effective way to deploy these services is through community hub settings like schools. We need schools to develop and scale new capacities, such as rebuilding trust and collaboration with parents, educators, students, and nonprofit partners led by people of color through relationship-centered practices, address lost learning opportunities in an engaging and student-centered way, and quickly hire and effectively train personnel to address whole-child needs.

Investing in community school models or wraparound services, especially in communities of color that may have been hardest hit by the economic and health impacts of the pandemic, presents a promising option for use of federal aid. Community schools can provide services such as mental and physical health services, nutrition and housing support, tutoring and expanded learning time, family engagement, and community collaboration, and [are shown to improve student outcomes](#).

Given that a host of circumstances impact student outcomes, community schools offer a holistic model for providing essential services to families so that their children are able to focus on learning and not on other pressing issues like food insecurity, inadequate housing, internet access, or health needs. The new federal aid offers an excellent opportunity for schools to cover the major upfront costs associated with establishing community school models, create a structure that can yield long-term benefits, and provide a platform for identifying [federal, state and community resources](#) to sustain the community school going forward. Fully leveraging Medicaid match at school hubs with free care rules, and building systems for care coordination and case management, could help pull in federal and flexible state funding for sustaining *community school models* over the long-term.

To do this effectively, school sites and divisions must get clear direction and support (both resources and technical assistance) from the state. We suggest a two-pronged approach to expanding community school models that will 1) provide highest poverty schools with a dedicated funding stream to establish and expand community schools and 2) build capacity statewide to support school sites and divisions as they implement these new models.

To qualify for state support for a community schools model, we recommend that schools be required to address the [four pillars of community schools](#) (integrated student supports, expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, active family and community engagement, and collaborative leadership practices), and adopt the following values and principles: 1) center relationships, including collaborating with students, families, educators, community partners, and administrators to develop the “community schools plan” which should be presented in a public meeting with the school and/or district stakeholders, and 2) name and address racial equity, including incorporating culturally and linguistically inclusive and relevant conditions, instructional and other materials, and teaching and learning practices.

System Navigators

In addition to providing funding for sustainable support models like community schools, we encourage the state to also consider investing in system navigators who can help families and students access education and other ARP services, such as shelter, utilities, housing and rental assistance, child care, Head Start, unemployment, and tax credits. With several new federal resources available to families through application, and existing services for low-income families such as affordable broadband in certain localities becoming more essential, we should be coordinating efforts to make the most of these available resources to help Virginia families recover so that students have more stability for reacclimating to school. System navigators could be structured similarly to the recently proposed bill ([SB 1462](#)) that would have offered navigators

through short-term positions at DSS to assist families in navigating existing federal programs to afford internet access or contract with community-based organizations that are already providing these services to marginalized families. [States like Oregon](#) have recently considered tax navigators for taking advantage of credits like the Earned Income Tax Credit - the revised Child Tax Credit from ARP would also be relevant for a similar current position - and [Nashville](#) is experimenting with training its existing government staff to take on supplementary navigation roles for connecting students and families to social services. [The Education Trust](#) also recommends assigning navigators to English Learner students who may have experienced unique barriers to learning during the pandemic.

Ultimately, these type of services are needed in schools on an ongoing basis, and state leaders should commit to fully funding the Virginia Board of Education's prescribed Standards of Quality , which would greatly increase the number of essential positions in schools such as nurses, social workers, counselors, and other support staff that play critical roles in providing and connecting students with needed services. Given the temporary nature of the ARP funding, system navigators over the next few years can play an important role in helping school communities maximize available federal and state resources, and fill in for the current missing positions in schools.

Community-Based Organizations Serving Students from Immigrant Families

Fund Our Schools recommends providing additional resources, possibly through a VDOE grant program, to community-based organizations that serve immigrant students. This funding could be directly provided to community-based organizations or subgranted through school divisions. Many immigrant families have not qualified for federal aid over the past year and have been more reluctant to accept social services for their children because of fear of public charge rules. [Nearly 1 in 5 immigrant families](#) with children avoided non-cash public benefits or other help with basic needs last year out of fear of new federal rules. That is why it is so critical that organizations that have existing relationships with immigrant communities and serve students, receive supplemental support to scale their efforts to break down barriers for families accessing public support, and, in turn, improve the chances of students being able to return to the classroom and focus on learning. There is growing evidence that English Language Learner students may have been the most negatively impacted by the pandemic, in terms of academic achievement, out of all student subgroups, and an equitable, culturally- and student-centered response must take into account the unique social barriers these students' families face.

Community-Based Organizations Providing Afterschool and Summer Programs

We further recommend investing at this time in community-based organizations and public after-school centers that serve students from immigrant and low-income families, and provide after-school and summer programs. After-school and summer programs will be an essential strategy to combat lost learning time and address the social and emotional needs of students. [Decades](#) of research supports the fact that after-school programs improve academic performance, attendance, behavior, graduation rates, and social skills. These programs are assets to schools by offering: more time and staff to engage students in learning activities; opportunities for social,

emotional and interpersonal connections; access to supports like physical activity, meals, and counseling; strong communications and connections with families; additional spaces and resources from community partners including libraries, parks, museums, faith-based organizations, businesses, and philanthropy.

In directing these funds, we recommend the state accommodate the needs of older youth. During the pandemic, middle and high school students have faced unique challenges not yet addressed by previous influxes of COVID relief funding. Many of these students have had to work or provide child care for siblings in order to support their families. This has led to lost learning opportunities. These students will need the support of after-school programs to address these gaps. Virginia could also address the economic barriers they face to accessing after-school or summer programs. We suggest the state allow programs to provide monetary incentives to older youth so that they may participate and support their families. [Washington, D.C. plans to pay](#) high school students to make it easier for them to participate in summer programming this year, and Virginia could provide flexible funding that allows community-based organizations offering critical services to do the same over the coming years. Many community-based organizations already have the infrastructure and expertise to operate after-school and summer programs. Divisions that are busier than ever trying to meet the needs of students during the pandemic should collaborate with these organizations. Providing these groups federal aid directly from the state or through a subgrant via the division could drastically scale these opportunities for students in the near term.

2. Create and Fully Invest in the Equity Fund

In 2019, the Virginia Board of Education (VBOE) prescribed new Standards of Quality (SOQs) for Virginia's public schools pursuant to their mandate under Article VIII, Sec. 2 of the Virginia Constitution. One of the new prescriptions was the creation of an Equity Fund to substantially invest in our most high-need school divisions. More than ever, our children attending high-poverty schools need critical investments in their future that address the many barriers they have faced over the past year and beyond. Fund Our Schools recommends that the state invest \$62 million per year in the Equity Fund for fiscal years 2022, 2023, and 2024, the cost identified by the most recent Fiscal Impact Statement for [a bill](#) that included the provision, as the minimum amount necessary for the state to meet its constitutional obligation to provide a high-quality education to Virginia's students. This investment has been a top priority for education advocates since it was recommended by the VBOE and is critically needed at this time. Appropriating the money during the special session over a three-year period will also provide an easier pathway to codify the effort in the upcoming 2022 legislative session, and we implore lawmakers to consider this option.

3. Allowable General School Infrastructure Support

The State Fiscal Recovery Fund offers an opportunity for state lawmakers to make a meaningful downpayment to modernize our schools. Fund Our Schools has put out a [fact sheet](#) citing the substantial breadth of research on the positive impacts school infrastructure investments can have on student health and safety and on economic growth. While the recent Treasury guidance restricts many uses of this funding for general school infrastructure use, the state is allowed to

invest the full differential of the revenue loss provision in accordance with [sections 602\(c\)\(1\)\(C\) and 603\(c\)\(1\)\(C\) of the guidance](#). Virginia's revenue loss provision amount should be fully invested in a need-based school infrastructure grant program administered by VDOE. This is a long overdue investment in schools that will continue to positively impact students and school staff long after ARP funding finishes in 2024.

4. Investing in Broadband Access & Affordability

In rural areas across the state, many students [lack access to sufficient high speed internet](#) to enable them to learn remotely and access job opportunities. Approximately 697,000 Virginians [do not have access](#) to a wired internet connection of 25 Mbps or more. Another 306,000 people in Virginia [don't have access](#) to any wired internet options at all. This is an enormous equity issue that requires significant investment from the state. We urge lawmakers in Virginia to use funds from the Capital Projects Fund, State Fiscal Recovery Funds, in addition to funds available under the federal E-Rate program, to develop broadband infrastructure throughout the state to ensure equitable access for families across Virginia.

We also urge lawmakers to consider ways to ensure the affordability of broadband services. Specifically, in addition to developing broadband infrastructure in rural areas, consider programs designed to make broadband affordable to those with low incomes, such as discounting monthly service. Innovative proposed legislation from the last general legislative session, such as [SB 1462](#), which would have created a pilot project at DSS to assist a set of households enrolled in SNAP with subsidized broadband service could be looked to as a model to be brought to scale in Virginia. Lawmakers could also consider replicating aspects of a program Alabama created, using CARES federal aid to [provide vouchers to low-income families with students](#) to purchase broadband. Because the nature of K-12 education delivery has likely fundamentally changed during the pandemic, and more learning and assignments will require high-speed internet at home, we encourage lawmakers to look to affordability solutions that can be sustained over the long term. One potential pot of funding that could be used for this purpose is General Fund dollars that could be freed up by using Capital Projects Fund or State Fiscal Recovery Fund dollars to fund the Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (\$50 million a year). Creating a reserve fund for those newly-freed up General Fund dollars could support affordability initiatives for years to come.

Additional ARP Funding Priorities to Support Students and Families

Beyond our top four coalition priorities, Fund Our Schools has several other recommendations for usage of ARP funds that would improve student and family outcomes and mitigate disproportionate harms from the pandemic on specific communities.

Additional Support for Students Experiencing Homelessness

Support for students experiencing homelessness is critical. As noted by Dr. James Lane in his [recent testimony](#) before Congress, during the 2019-2020 school year, 17,496 children identified as homeless attended school in the state, and the pandemic has only increased that number. [Data](#) shows that the number of people experiencing homelessness in the Richmond, Virginia region increased by 53% year-over-year, from 546 people in January 2020 to 838 people in January 2021. Despite widespread reporting of increased homelessness, official state data indicates that the number of students attending K-12 public schools in Virginia and identified as homeless decreased by about 30% or 3,000 between the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years. While we know the number of students experiencing homelessness likely did not drop to this magnitude over a one-year period, a more likely explanation, and one in line with national [trends](#) and [reporting](#), is that we have thousands of students experiencing homelessness and that are unaccounted for in our school systems.

Virginia was appropriated around [\\$14 million](#) in funding specifically dedicated to support the identification, enrollment, and school participation of children and youth experiencing homelessness. [In line with national recommendations](#), we urge lawmakers to use a small portion of its \$4.3 billion for the State Fiscal Recovery Fund dollars to double dedicated homelessness funding to locate, engage, maintain connection, and support children and youth experiencing homelessness.

In addition, we urge you to invest additional funds in the state's Program for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, [Project Hope-Virginia](#), to engage in outreach campaigns to inform students and their families of their rights under the McKinney-Vento Act, support local education agencies in the identification and re-engagement of students experiencing homelessness, and coordinate with other state-level program offices to ensure funds are being maximized to support students experiencing homelessness across various state agencies receiving ARP funds.

HVAC and Roofing Grants

In addition to maximizing the revenue loss provision funding for general school infrastructure support, FOS recommends investing other State Fiscal Recovery Fund dollars in a need-based VDOE grant program to improve HVAC systems and roofing. The quality of a school's HVAC system affects everything from student and staff health to student performance, but it is also a critical factor in mitigating the spread of the coronavirus. As with all school infrastructure challenges, HVAC systems and roofing is an issue of education and health equity: divisions with the highest share of students of color and students from low-income families are [more likely](#) to have outdated HVAC systems, which puts their students and staff at increased risk of being exposed to COVID-19. High quality and updated roofs provide a place for modern HVAC systems to reside, prevent water damage which can lead to substantial costs, and, when schools are able to attach solar to them, can [greatly reduce energy costs and sometimes allow resale back to the grid](#).

While collecting a state inventory of HVAC and roofing needs for schools is critical, based on national estimates, we can understand that the scale of need is likely significant in Virginia. The

Government Accountability Office [estimates](#) that about a third of schools need an upgraded HVAC system nationally, and the cost is about \$1 million per building. In Virginia, we have 1,859 K-12 public schools, meaning if we are in line with national trends, we would have around \$620 million in needed HVAC upgrade costs for our schools. Of course, divisions with more resources might be better able to absorb this cost and are more likely to have made improvements as needed over the years and this year with ESSER I and II funding. While recent Capital Improvement Plan data presented at the Commission on School Construction and Modernization indicates many schools have made recent upgrades to their HVAC systems, this still does not capture overall need. The need for adequate roofing is another part of the equation.

We have the opportunity to allocate this support in an equitable way through the At-Risk Add-On formula, which accounts for student poverty in divisions. A potential model comes from a [previously proposed](#) House budget item which involved an innovative grant program through the VDOE that used the formula as a basis for distribution of federal funds. Using such a model through a state agency could ensure an equitable distribution and that environmental goals such as roof compatibility with solar are achieved. Lastly, because earlier pots of K-12 federal support allowed schools to invest in HVAC systems, some schools felt pressured to make the upgrades for safety purposes while forgoing other funding opportunities such as more money for remediation efforts. These schools should not be penalized for these investments, and should be invited with other schools to apply for reimbursement if they made recent upgrades to their systems in response to COVID-19.

Support Other Critical Provisions of the Revised Standards of Quality

In late 2019 and again in the fall of 2020, the VBOE issued a set of [Standards of Quality \(SOQs\)](#) which, if funded, would go far to increase educational opportunity for Virginia's children. These SOQs represent the minimum cost the state Board says is necessary to meet the state's constitutional duty to ensure a high-quality education for Virginia's students. While all of the SOQ recommendations are crucial investments for Virginia's children, perhaps the most important are those around additional staffing in public schools. In particular, Virginia schools need additional counselors, support staff, nurses, psychologists, social workers, and English Learner teachers. We urge the administration and lawmakers to utilize ARP funds to kickstart a long-term--and long-needed--investment in the SOQs as recommended by the VBOE. In particular, we urge lawmakers to fund the 1:250 counselor to student ratio [as recommended by the American School Counselors Association](#), increase funding for English Learner teachers, lift the 2009 support position cap and the 2010 'temporary' flexibility language waiving certain staffing requirements, and fund the recommended specialized support staff ratio of 4:1,000 to ensure sufficient access to social workers, psychologists, and critical support staff.

Sufficient staffing levels in Virginia's public schools are more critical now than ever before. As our children face unique and extensive barriers to success, [teachers are facing burnout and stress as well](#). Asking teachers and school staff to shoulder additional burdens--as we have long done in Virginia--increases the likelihood that schools will face even greater staffing shortages, leaving our children without necessary supports and services. We must fund the staffing levels recommended

by our state education experts and ensure that teachers--and thus our students--have access to the support staff, counselors, social workers, and psychologists who help them learn, connect them with crucial supports and services, and allow our schools to function.

We must also ensure sufficient funding for Virginia's English Learner (EL) teachers. Virginia's population of EL students is [higher than the national average](#) and is growing rapidly. [Significant achievement gaps exist among EL students compared to their peers](#). Nationally, only 63% of EL students graduate from high school, compared to 82% of their peers; these disparities are only likely to grow due to the pandemic. Sufficient staffing for EL students is critical to ensuring adequate access to educational opportunity; the recommendations from the VBOE is the minimum level of staffing needed to ensure EL students receive the supports and services they need to succeed.

Virginia has a unique opportunity to leverage extensive federal funding to jumpstart an investment that has been needed for too long--staffing our public schools. We urge lawmakers to seize this chance to fund long-term priorities that are crucial for the success of Virginia's children.

Study the Equity of Our School Funding Formula

After a year where so many of the inequities of our education system were laid bare by the economic and social upheaval caused by the pandemic, our coalition believes the state can not wait any longer to study the adequacy and equity of Virginia's school funding formula and to review how to improve the distribution of our overall state direct aid to schools and how to account for student need and cost. It is time to commission a state study to consider the overall equity of our primary funding formula, the Local Composite Index, and to review how student need and cost can better be accounted for. Reconfiguring the funding formula to take account of student need is an [official recommendation](#) of the Commission to Examine Racial Inequity in Virginia Law

Increase Funding for Educator and Staff Professional Development, Including Cultural Awareness Training and Training on Student and Family Engagement Available Over Three Years

We support investing in educator and school staff professional development (PD) in high-need areas, including accelerated learning, re-engaging students, restorative practices, implicit bias training, and creating and expanding courses on ethnic and language studies. We also call for additional PD support for engaging with students with special needs, as recommended by the [draft commission report](#) by JLARC in 2020. Using ARP funds to invest in teacher development will improve our ability to respond to the emerging needs of students coming out of the pandemic, and will yield long-term dividends.

Educator PD should be expansive and include expanded learning staff, such as paraprofessionals and staff from community-based organizations with whom schools and divisions partner. We recommend system navigators (see recommendation above) also be provided PD if placed in schools. PD provided to administrators should specifically include principal and school leader training (especially on collaborative leadership practices and systems change work).

Additionally, an educator professional development budget investment should include dedicated resources to support divisions in prioritizing high-quality staff training on student and family engagement. The pandemic has intensified the barriers that already existed between schools and families, making it even more critical that the state invest in training teachers, staff and administrators on relationship-centered practices that are rooted in trust in order to build strong and equitable relationships with families. For example, student and family engagement should include using parent teacher home visits as a tool to help teachers and families build relationships, develop shared understanding and goals, and engage families in student learning.

Furthermore, funding should be permitted for coaches and master teachers to support school sites and divisions in providing targeted PD and developing skills of teachers, administrators and school site staff.

Increase Funding for Social-Emotional Learning and Trauma-Informed Educator Professional Development Over Three Years

We recommend using ESSER III (state-set-aside) dollars to support the implementation of high-quality integrated academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning (SEL) practices in an integrated multi-tiered system of support at the schoolwide level and to expand the state's capacity to support divisions in implementing SEL, trauma-informed practices, and culturally relevant, affirming, and sustaining practices by creating statewide resources.

Students, parents, educators, and school staff alike have endured immense trauma over the past year and recovery will undoubtedly take many years. In order for schools to be places of inclusion and healing, educators need to build their capacity to support students socially and emotionally, as well as academically. Divisions will need sustained investments to develop and implement tiered educator and staff training. Additionally, SEL training should be explicitly anti-racist SEL training so as to avoid further embedding white supremacist norms in our educational practices. Furthermore, divisions should be required to report planned and actual PD investments and measure the effectiveness of those investments annually to VDOE.

Increase Teacher Workforce Investments to Improve the Teacher Pipeline and Recruit Diverse and Prepared Educators

We recommend increasing investments in educator recruitment and retention programs and prioritize attracting, preparing and supporting a diverse pool of educators. Prior to the pandemic, school divisions throughout the state reported having teacher shortages. As teacher shortages persist in high-need schools, students of color and students from low-income families are often most seriously impacted. This is especially true for high-poverty schools where shortages are acutely felt as these schools have a more difficult time attracting qualified teachers. The state must take proactive steps to build the supply of [profession-ready](#) prepared teachers.

We urge you to give special attention to the use of one-time ARP funding to invest in programs that expand the teacher pipeline by attracting and retaining qualified educators, especially

educators of color. Richmond Teacher Residency is a prime example in Virginia, and increasing programs like this, especially down to the undergraduate-level could improve the quality and diversity of our teacher pipeline. Research shows that residency programs have been effective in attracting a greater number of teacher candidates of color and prepares them to teach in high-need areas. Many similar programs nationally help attract a diverse pool of educators by offering them financially feasible pathways. Increased investment in teacher preparation and support can stem the attrition that has been exacerbated by the myriad stressors on school communities since the beginning of the pandemic.

It is imperative that the state commit multi-year funding to attract new teachers by providing larger, livable stipends and program grants. By assuring prospective teachers financial assistance, teacher residencies can promote new teacher recruitment and retention, particularly in high-need areas.

Enhance the State Earned Income Tax Credit Using the De Minimis Exemption

While ARP has very clear Treasury guidance around not using the aid to offset budget expenditures with tax reductions, there is a de minimis carve out that allows for a 1% reduction and clearly indicates that this could be used for expanding a state's Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Virginia's exemption is [estimated by the Tax Policy Center to be nearly \\$274 million](#), which should be sufficient to make Virginia's state EITC partly refundable, ideally at least to the 10% to 15% range of the federal credit. Making our state EITC at least partly refundable with ARP funds would put hundreds of dollars, on average, back in low- and moderate-income Virginia families' pockets, and could set us on an easier path in the coming general legislative session to make this long-overdue change, that 23 other states have already enacted, permanent.

In addition to being the country's most successful and proven anti-poverty tool for children, lifting over 3 million kids out of poverty each year, the EITC also helps low-income families get the resources they need to get to their jobs, keep the lights and heat on, and partially cover childcare costs. [Research shows](#) that children in families that receive an EITC go on to have higher test scores and graduation rates, and earn more as adults. This anti-poverty program is proven and inextricably linked to student well-being and outcomes, and that is why Fund Our Schools stands behind appropriating State Fiscal Recovery Fund dollars to make the state EITC at least partly refundable for FY23, and asks lawmakers to pass legislation to codify this much-needed change during the 2022 legislative session. With a downpayment from ARP funds to begin the expansion of this credit, it is our hope that it will make codifying this change in the upcoming year an achievable goal, and one that will pay long-term dividends for students in low-income families.

Note of caution and recommendations for distributing ESSER III (state-set-aside) and State Fiscal Recovery Fund dollars via need-based grant programs

For all of the investments outlined in the sections above with a suggestion of appropriating federal aid through a grant program, we offer the following recommendations. Sometimes the school divisions that could benefit the most from the suggested grant programs may not have dedicated

staff, resources, or capacity to navigate or be competitive in the application process. This can further widen the gap between the schools with and without resources and support. We also want to avoid not having enough applicants because of the application timing and process.

Fund Our Schools recommends:

- Additional weight should be given to the applicant's poverty status to ensure communities most in need are prioritized. Also, to avoid a bias against high schools which traditionally experience undercounts of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals, poverty should be measured based on Census SAPIE and zip code data as opposed to Free and Reduced Price Meal pupil population.
- Additional targeted outreach should be conducted for these high-poverty schools to provide support for the grant application process, also taking into consideration geographic diversity.
- Grant application processes should also include alternatives to traditional written processes, including phone or virtual interviews, presentations, and more.

Conclusion

We have an unprecedented opportunity as we begin our recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic to use significant state and federal educational dollars to invest in long-term, transformational solutions that reimagine and rebuild schools to help Virginia's highest-need students thrive. In economic terms, if pandemic-related learning loss is not rigorously addressed, Virginia is likely to lose billions of dollars in GDP over the coming decades from decreased productivity (The [OECD](#), [World Bank](#), [McKinsey](#), and [Brookings](#) all have estimates on GDP loss). Intervening immediately to stem this loss is critical for equity and protecting Virginia's long-term economic interests. Accordingly, we urge you to incorporate our top four priorities (wraparound services, the Equity Fund, school infrastructure, and broadband affordability and access) recommendations into the special legislative session budget this summer and codify many of the investments in legislation in the 2022 legislative session. We also encourage you to consider the other investments listed in this memorandum that would improve student well-being and respond to immediate challenges posed by the pandemic.

Thank you.

American Federation of Teachers, Virginia
Edu-Futuro
EMGAGE
Legal Aid Justice Center
New Virginia Majority
Richmond Region LULAC Council #4614
RISE for Youth
Side by Side
The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis
Virginia Education Association

Virginia Educators United
Virginia Excels
Virginia Organization of Delta Kappa Gamma
Virginia Organizing
Virginia PTA
Virginia Retired Teachers Association
Virginia School Counselor Association
Voices for Virginia's Children

June 11, 2021

Dear Governor Northam

On April 24, 2020, the FDA issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for non-surgical face masks, which children in Virginia's schools are wearing today. Federal law **21 US CODE 360bbb-3(e)(1)(A)(ii)(iii)** governing EUAs requires that:

- (ii) Appropriate conditions designed to ensure that individuals to whom the product is administered **are informed-**
 - (I) that the Secretary has authorized the emergency use of the product;**
 - (II) of the significant known and potential benefits and risks of such use,** and of the extent to which such benefits and risks are unknown; and
 - (III) of the option to accept or refuse administration of the product,** of the consequences, if any, of refusing administration of the product, and of the alternatives to the product that are available and of their benefits and risks.
- (iii) Appropriate conditions for the monitoring and reporting of adverse events associated with the emergency use of the product.**

Any product issued under an EUA is considered investigational or experimental for the purpose intended. This federal law is in place so that the patient is made aware of the potential risks and benefits of the medical intervention, the right to refuse, and the appropriate place to report adverse reactions.

There are numerous reports of children experiencing physical and mental harm from wearing masks in school, including, but not limited to, collapsing during recess, severe migraines, vomiting, anxiety, and depression.

Governor Northam's EO79 requires that "all students, teachers, staff, and visitors must wear a mask over their nose and mouth while on school property. EO79 maintains existing exemptions for mask usage including but not limited to eating and drinking, exercising, playing an instrument, and for those for whom it is medically unsafe."

As a physician, Governor Northam, knew, or should have known, that EO79 is not following the EAU's requirements as outlined above, nor is it following science. As required by law, EO79 does not advise that the mask mandates are EUA and cannot be mandated. He also should have known that it has been a long-standing practice prior to COVID that masks were not recommended for asymptomatic individuals and that there is an increase in infections among those who are wearing masks:

The science is clear. RationalGround.com [researchers](#) examined cases, and this is what they discovered:

They studied the number of cases over a 229-day period from May 1 through Dec. 15 and divided the results of the two study groups by days with mask mandates and days without mask mandates. The non-mandate data group includes both states that never had a mandate and those that did at some point, but data set included only the days they did not have a mask mandate.

The results: When comparing states with mandates vs. those without, or periods of times within a state with a mandate vs. without, there is absolutely no evidence the mask mandate worked to slow the spread one iota. In total, in the states that had a mandate in effect, there were 9,605,256 confirmed COVID cases over 5,907 total days, an average of 27 cases per 100,000 per day. When states did not have a statewide order (which includes the states that never had them and the period of time masking states did not have the mandate in place) there were 5,781,716 cases over 5,772 total days, averaging 17 cases per 100,000 people per day.

The reverse correlation between periods of masking and non-masking is remarkable.

In addition, and most importantly, there are no safety studies on long-term mask use in children. There has been no informed consent on the right to refuse this EAU medical intervention as outlined in federal law. There is no place to report adverse events following the use of this medical intervention given Emergency Use Authorization.

How many human rights violations are being committed?

There are international treaties enacted to prevent this.
The Nuremberg Code states:

“The voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential.”

Article 3 of UNESCO’s Universal Declaration of Bioethics and Human Rights states:

“Human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms are to be fully respected.

The interests and welfare of the individual should have priority over the sole interest of science or society.”

And now there are scientists who are warning of the risks of inhaled nanoparticles from masks:

Need for assessing the inhalation of micro(nano)plastic debris shed from masks, respirators, and home-made face coverings during the COVID-19 pandemic

“There seems to be, however, an important piece missing in the suite of standards and volumes of research on inhalable environmental contaminants. None of these standards, including the ASTM standards and NIOSH regulation, which are adopted by the FDA in regulating medical face masks and surgical respirators in the U.S. (FDA, 2020a), regulate respirable debris such as micro(nano)plastics that may be present in these products. In fact, such neglect is not unique to US standards: a review of current ISO standards, EU standards and Chinese standards on masks and respirators found no information pertinent to this particular type of hazard. With these becoming a necessity for many in their daily life and work, **questions must be raised over this apparent regulatory gap concerning their long-term use safety. This is especially important given that there is already a growing body of evidence on the inhalation of micro(nano)plastics and their adverse effects in humans and animals (Prata, 2018).**”

“Whether these plastic debris could cause stress and inflammation in the human respiratory tract and exacerbate vulnerability to viral infection is a further question that warrants investigation.”

“A special note must be given on home-made cloth face coverings. For fabrics repurposed as face masks, as per the current guidelines by the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention CDC, 2020), debris is likely to be generated from cutting and tearing...Detergent residues and lint generated from machine laundering and tumble drying may also be present as inhalable contaminants in washed garments.”

ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7537728/

Countries around the globe and states across the United States that have **not** required masks have not experienced any detriment to their children; therefore, it is illogical to assume that masks in Virginia government buildings businesses, and schools are the only impediment to the spread of SARS-Cov-2.

A study from Sweden earlier this year showed negligible viral impact despite no mask use:

Open Schools, Covid-19, and Child and Teacher Morbidity in Sweden
Despite Sweden's having kept schools and preschools open, we found a low incidence of severe Covid-19 among schoolchildren and children of preschool age during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. Among the 1.95 million children who were 1 to 16 years of age, 15 children had Covid-19, MIS-C, or both conditions and were admitted to an ICU, which is equal to 1 child in 130,000 ... Social distancing was encouraged in Sweden, but wearing face masks was not. [nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc2026670](https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMc2026670)

The Swedish study confirmed the Ireland study released in May 2020 which showed, despite children still participating in choir and band with wind instruments, that there were no cases of onward transmission:

No Evidence of Secondary Transmission of Covid-19 from Children Attending School in Ireland, 2020

In summary, examination of all Irish paediatric cases of Covid-19 attending school during the pre-symptomatic and symptomatic periods of infection (n = 3) identified no cases of onward transmission to other children or adults within the school and a variety of other settings. These included music lessons (woodwind instruments) and choir practice, both of which are high-risk activities for transmission. Furthermore, no onward transmission from the three identified adult cases to children was identified. [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7268273/](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7268273/)

“Willful negligence” barely scratches the surface of the actions of EO79, in not following through on commonsense medical practice - remember how many times the CDC and the WHO have flip-flopped on mask-wearing requirements despite the long-standing evidence that masks are not for asymptomatic individuals nor are there the required safety studies to shame and coerce. not only the adults in this state. but our innocent children too, into wearing an untested and unapproved medical device without following federal law, utilizing commonsense, and providing informed consent including, most importantly, the right to refuse for ourselves and our children.

We have witnessed countless governors (including our own) at events unmasked, many legislators attend their committee meetings unmasked. They have the option to remove the mask from their face without retribution but not our children, who in some instances must go to a back wall in their classroom to remove their mask for a “breathing break.”

Virginia **Emergency Services and Disaster Law § 44-146.13. Short title Article XII. Validity** states:

This compact shall be construed to effectuate the purposes stated in Article I. If any provision of this compact is declared unconstitutional, or the applicability thereof to any person or circumstances is held invalid, the constitutionality of the remainder of this compact and the applicability thereof to other persons and circumstances shall not be affected.

EO79 is clearly a violation of the Constitution of Virginia, Article I Section 1. Equality and rights of men:

Section 1. Equality and rights of men. That all men are by nature equally free and independent and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety.

Masks, whether surgical or cloth, worn by children seven to eight hours a day for daily activity have never been evaluated for safety. No one can say with certainty that we are not torturing children - there are literally no safety studies.

According to federal law, parents must be made aware of the following: (1) non-surgical masks have only been approved for EUA, (2) the known and unknown benefits and risks, including the concerns raised by scientists regarding the long-term risk of inhalation of nanoparticles, and (3) that they have the **right to refuse**. Further, to be in compliance with federal law, there must be a provision for submitting and recording adverse reactions to long-term mask use.

EO79 does not provide information that mask mandates fall under the EAU and therefore cannot be mandated. In addition, it does not advise parents that their children are not required to wear masks under the EAU.

The Virginia Constitution **§ 1-240.1. Rights of parents.**

A parent has a fundamental right to make decisions concerning the upbringing, education, and care of the parent's child.

Every day that goes by and this information is not made public is another day EO79 is committing a human rights violation. These are human rights violations and should be treated as such.

Sincerely,

Deborah Hommer

Dear, Mr. Gecker

My name is Shyann Bradshaw, I am currently a twelfth-grade student and soon to be graduate. As a student, I believe that school could be doing more for students to prepare them for jobs and life outside of school. I understand that the core subjects that we have are there for a reason and are needed, but the curriculum doesn't think of what's outside of that. This problem is something that we've had since schools started their curriculums and focused too much on the subjects that need to be taught. Sure, we're learning something, and we are getting the education that we need, but what happens after?

Guidance counselors, teachers, the principal, everyone in the school building only mentions college to "prepare you for your future job". They mention college every month of every year; as if it's the only choice we have after high school. Not everyone is going to be going to college and not everyone likes the idea of owing any money so that they could get a higher education. This is not an issue just limited to Virginia, but to the entire country. Even when others, such as students, parents, and even teachers, realize this problem, nothing is done about it. Why? Because the curriculum stays the same and rarely has any new changes to it that would affect the school system in a different way than normal.

I propose that a change should be made to help students with jobs after high school, whether that requires college or not. In my opinion, making a class specifically for this would be the best way to go. That way, students would learn the basics of applying and having a job, as well as the different fields of careers, what that career does, the others in its field, and the steps on how to get the job of their choice. This way, students aren't lost and stressed trying to figure out what they would like to do and they have an easier time applying and starting a job during or after high school. Of course tests will be needed for the class like every other, so students would be tested on each field, those fields being different chapters in the curriculum for the class.

In every proposal, there are of course some or many cons, depending on what exactly is proposed. For my own proposal, there are a few, those being that the school may not be able to provide some equipment that may be necessary for the class such as the projector and projector screen, a smartboard, the chairs and seats, or even the teachers themselves. Having another class would mean paying for all of those things, which not all schools may be able to do. For some, it may just be a matter that they may not have enough room for another class. There are some solutions to these cons though, such as holding a fundraiser to pay for everything and using old classrooms or some used to be classrooms.

If this proposal were to be taken into consideration, a petition could always be used to see what everyone else thinks of the idea. It could even be posted to several social media platforms, so the word gets out easier. I believe that this proposal would work if the right steps were taken to make the change. Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule and day to read this.

-Shyann Bradshaw

...

To: Chesterfield County Public School Board Members-Ryan Harter-Matoaca, Ann Coker-Bermuda, Dorothy Heffron-Clover Hill, Debbie Bailey-Dale, and Kathryn Haines-Midlothian, herein, Chesterfield County School Board members; To: Virginia Board of Education Members – Daniel A. Gecker, Dr. Jamelle S. Wilson, Pamela Davis-Vaught, Dr. Francisco Durán, Anne B. Holton, Dr. Tammy Mann, Dr. Keisha Pexton, Dr. Stewart D. Roberson, Anthony Swann, herein, Virginia Board of Education members. To: Governor Ralph S. Northam, herein, Governor.

Notice to Agent is Notice to Principal and Notice to Principal is Notice to Agent

Comes now, Vanessa Eberle, one of the people (as seen in Article 1 Section 1 of the Virginia Constitution) Sui Juris, in this court of record, do make the following claims,

Equality and Rights of Men

Chesterfield County School Board members, the Virginia Board of Education and Virginia Governor are not allowing the students, staff, teachers and volunteers to live freely by requiring Masks and Vaccines. Article I, Section I of the VA Constitution states: That all men are by nature equally free and independent and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety. One of the people has the right to choose if he or she enjoys wearing a mask or not. That choice of liberty interest was not granted to the control of government officials, but to mothers and fathers. Nor did the people grant the authority in the constitution for government officials, who as Servants, to force vaccinations on the children or the people. If you do believe that you were granted this authority, please provide the Article and Section of the Constitution that shows that you have this authority.

People the Source of Power

Chesterfield County School Board members, the Virginia Board of Education and Virginia Governor work for we the people (Article 1, Section 2)-That all power is vested in, and consequently derived from, THE People, that magistrates are their trustees and servants, and at all times amenable to them. Please take further notice that as Servants and Trustees of the People, you have no authority to force the People to wear a mask or become vaccinated, because of the benefit that you have been paid to provide the People. Take further notice, the funds being used to create a school program, come from the People.

Government Instituted for Common Benefit

Furthermore, Article 1, Section 3 states that government is, or ought to be, instituted for the common benefit, protection, and security of the people, nation, or community; of all the various modes and forms of government, that is best which is capable of producing the greatest degree of happiness and safety, and is most effectually secured against the danger of maladministration; and, whenever any government shall be found inadequate or contrary to these purposes, a majority of the community hath an indubitable, inalienable, and indefeasible right to reform, alter, or abolish it, in such manner as shall be judged most conducive to the public weal. Acting in maladministration is a reason for the People to bring forth removal.

By the power of one of the people, and the power declared in the above constitutional provision, I Vanessa Eberle demand, require and order a complete removal of the Mask Mandate and Vaccine mandate or forced treatments or interactions relating to the students, teachers, staff, and volunteers immediately. As seen above, all rights that were set forth in the above section are self-executing, and since you are being given notice that this is demanded.

Autograph



Date 6/14/2021

To: Chesterfield County Public School Board Members-Ryan Harter-Matoaca, Ann Coker-Bermuda, Dorothy Heffron-Clover Hill, Debbie Bailey-Dale, and Kathryn Haines-Midlothian, herein, Chesterfield County School Board members; To: Virginia Board of Education Members – Daniel A. Gecker, Dr. Jamelle S. Wilson, Pamela Davis-Vaught, Dr. Francisco Durán, Anne B. Holton, Dr. Tammy Mann, Dr. Keisha Pexton, Dr. Stewart D. Roberson, Anthony Swann, herein, Virginia Board of Education members. To: Governor Ralph S. Northam, herein, Governor.

Notice to Agent is Notice to Principal and Notice to Principal is Notice to Agent

Comes now, Jessica Longshore, one of the people (as seen in Article 1 Section 1 of the Virginia Constitution) Sui Juris, in this court of record, do make the following claims,

Equality and Rights of Men

Chesterfield County School Board members, the Virginia Board of Education and Virginia Governor are not allowing the students, staff, teachers and volunteers to live freely by requiring Masks and Vaccines. Article I, Section I of the VA Constitution states: That all men are by nature equally free and independent and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety. One of the people has the right to choose if he or she enjoys wearing a mask or not. That choice of liberty interest was not granted to the control of government officials, but to mothers and fathers. Nor did the people grant the authority in the constitution for government officials, who as Servants, to force vaccinations on the children or the people. If you do believe that you were granted this authority, please provide the Article and Section of the Constitution that shows that you have this authority.

People the Source of Power

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By the power of one of the people, and the power declared in the above constitutional provision, I, Jessica Longshore demand, require and order a complete removal of the Mask Mandate and Vaccine mandate or forced treatments or interactions relating to the students, teachers, staff, and volunteers immediately. As seen above, all rights that were set forth in the above section are self-executing, and since you are being given notice that this is demanded.

Autograph Jessica A.

Longshore

Date 6/14/2021

Dear Board Members:

I wish to convey my concern about the proposed method to measure growth based on the changes mandated by [House Bill 2027](#). My primary concern is that the proposed methodology cannot control for the incentive structures which would invalidate the growth data.

There are significant incentives for schools to be fully accredited in Virginia. First, not being fully accredited is viewed as negative by the community. Second, being involved with the school improvement folks at VDOE does not make for a fun day for teachers and principals.

In the proposed methodology for calculating growth (comparing fall to spring scores), there are two means by which to produce positive growth results. The first is to work really hard with students throughout the year to ensure that they learn more than the majority of their peers across the Commonwealth. The second method is to "sandbag" in the fall. A very extreme example of this "sandbagging" would be for a school to hurriedly run the kids through the fall testing, telling them that this test isn't important, then really stress the importance of the spring test, offering all manner of incentives for students to try their best, and really playing up that test.

While I do not expect to see many of the extreme examples listed above to play out in our schools, there will certainly be variations of it. There are no incentives in place for schools to make sure their students try their best on the fall assessment. Even if fall incentives could be created to overcome the big incentive of accreditation, there would be no means by which to measure the efforts expended in the fall versus the spring assessment windows.

For those folks who remember the VGLA (Virginia Grade Level Assessment) fiasco that was implemented well over a decade before, the level of gamesmanship that will be evidenced with the proposed growth methodology would rival that of the VGLA "games". This will benefit no one.

If we want valid and reliable growth data, we must continue to calculate growth from the spring of the previous year to the next spring. This methodology controls for the incentive structures that are in place and will continue to provide much more reliable and valid data. More timely data is not preferable to more valid and reliable data.

Sincerely,
Matt Hurt

Matt Hurt, Ed.D.
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