

Public Comment Received (as of 5p.m. on Wednesday, May 6) for the Thursday, May 7, 2020, meeting of the Virginia Board of Education

Public Comment Received Via Email

For the Board:

Respectfully inquiring as to why the current plan of adaptation for the remaining school year did not include the opportunity for Virginia students to utilize a mixture of "Virtual Virginia" and current classes as adapted. A cursory analysis would indicate teachers could and should quickly adapt to the already established infrastructure and system of Virtual Virginia in order to streamline and standardize curriculum in order to allow students to progress in a predictable path. I know it has been a brief period to make such a transition but teachers of the 21st century should be able to execute this in a timely fashion for the benefit of Virginia students.

Respectfully,

Charles Birchfield
Concerned Parent

Public Comment Received Via Email Letter

Comments to the Virginia Board of Education re. Economics and Personal Finance Add-On Endorsement

May 7, 2020

President Gecker, members of the Board and Dr. Lane – My name is Dan Mortensen, and I am President of the Virginia Council on Economic Education. As many of you know, the Council is a non-profit organization which seeks to ensure that *all* students graduate from high school economically and financially literate. We work toward this goal by being a resource for teachers and school divisions. Through our affiliated university-based centers for economic education, we provide professional development, classroom resources, and programs for K-12 teachers to assist them in teaching economics and personal finance to their students.

On behalf of VCEE, we applaud you and the Department of Education for pursuing an add-on endorsement to teach economics and personal finance at the high school level. We agree that it is important to do so.

Virginia is a leader in its efforts to have our students graduate economically and financially literate and has strong Standards of Learning for Economics and Personal Finance—currently, and even more so with some changes being proposed the Standards.

For students to benefit from these strong SOLs, they need knowledgeable teachers. Teachers need to have this knowledge and understanding themselves before they can effectively teach their students.

We believe the proposal that is on your agenda today for an add-on endorsement is a positive step in that direction. I appreciate being a member of the working group that initiated the proposal. And, I particularly want to acknowledge and thank Patty Pitts for the way in which she managed the process. Patty pulled together a broad-based working group, reflecting many points of view, and she chaired the meeting in a fair manner in order to reach consensus.

We would have preferred a proposal which requires teachers **who are new** to teaching Economics and Personal Finance to earn more semester hours than the six in economics and six in personal finance. Research shows that many teachers will need more preparation to effectively teach this important course, particularly for those teaching the economics concepts in the course.

But we also recognize the importance of not setting the bar too high and creating a teacher shortage. The proposal before you today is the consensus of the working group, and we support it as an appropriate compromise.

Since the introduction of the EPF course, VCEE and its network of nine university-based centers have played a key role in assisting EPF teachers with both the content and effective hands-on

ways they can teach it effectively. Since 2010, we have served thousands of teachers with Economics Institutes (both online and face to face) and Personal Finance Institutes, as well as other courses and shorter programs. All are provided at no charge to teachers because of generous contributions from the private sector which fully understands the value of this education. We are committed to continuing to provide this professional development— both to assist new teachers who seek certification with the add-on endorsement as well as ongoing assistance to all teachers.

Taught well, Virginia's Economics and Personal Finance class will provide students with essential life skills that will benefit them regardless of their future vocation. This education helps to level the playing field by ensuring that all students are exposed to valuable economic concepts and useful financial knowledge and skills. It helps in developing productive employees and entrepreneurs, wise consumers and savers, and informed citizens.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts.

Public Comment Received Via Email Letter

Dear Mr. Decker, Mrs. Atkinson, Ms. Davis-Vaught, Dr. Durán, Ms. Holton, Dr. Mann, Dr. Pexton, and Dr. Wilson,

Thanks to Dr. Lane for putting the wellbeing of children and families first by acting swiftly to make the decision to eliminate standardized testing this year in light of the unprecedented challenges our students, families, and teachers are facing. I am grateful for all of Virginia's teachers who quickly moved to distance learning, along with all the support staff and organizations supporting this change. While far from perfect (how could it be), the efforts and attitudes have been laudable, except where they are not. ***Can the Department of Education find a better way to equitably serve all students and families across Virginia regardless of where they live than to remind them it is a local issue or to suggest they file a complaint?***

My next comment concerns the remarkable General Assembly session which included laws to promote equity, laws to eliminate discrimination, laws to reverse the criminalization of behaviors that had occurred over the past 30 years with the zero tolerance policies and school conduct codes based on the criminal code. So much to celebrate! I would like to be involved with the committee that addresses HB 753. I suggest that the Department look at Indiana's Social-Emotional Learning Competencies which are built upon a neurodevelopmental culturally responsive framework and incorporate CASEL's five core standards. <https://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/sebw/sel-competencies-final.pdf> The Department may want to make this document available to teachers now to support the work they are doing with students.

The United States lost another child to a restraint last week in Kalamazoo, MI.

https://www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/2020/05/16-year-old-lakeside-academy-student-dead-after-being-restrained-by-staff.html?fbclid=IwAR3YXpuzhxwdHfA9qrVbKUBc7L4aEVQIEmq_ptuw5aYVxXOFvoxrju2h2xM

I will re-iterate the position I have previously taken. **Restraints and seclusion not only are morally wrong, they are ineffective in reducing or preventing disruptive behavior or keeping teachers and students safer than in schools that do not use these procedures.** (I hear from parents on several parent forums that when they moved their child to a different school after their child was restrained and/or secluded at one school, their child did not "need" to be restrained or secluded at the new school. Same child. Different school approach. We have a good example of this with Grafton and Faison, which serve the same population, but with different philosophy and approaches. We must address the root causes that lead to the use of seclusion and restraint rather than focusing on regulating and training people how to "use restraint and seclusion safely." (It is not possible to use them safely). It is clear that the lessons learned during the decade of the brain (1990's), trauma research and ongoing brain, developmental, attachment, and neuroscience research have not been integrated into preservice for educators nor into ongoing continuing education for teachers.

- school systems that are successful in reducing disciplinary problems (and in increasing academic achievement) are using approaches that incorporate findings from brain, developmental, attachment, neuroscience, and trauma research. These schools use approaches informed by

neuroscience that are relationship based, trauma sensitive and that recognize and support brain body regulation and collaborative and proactive problem solving.

- Using a trauma sensitive approach is especially important when school is physically reopened because everyone – students, teachers, support staff, principals, parents – will have experienced a level of toxic stress never experienced as we've moved through this pandemic.
- Dr. Bruce Perry, renowned Neuroscientist, clinician, and trauma Psychiatrist has made several resources available **free** about the neuroscience of the brain including stress, toxic stress, trauma, regulation, state dependent functioning and much more. See: <https://www.neurosequential.com/covid-19-resources> The NN COVID-19 Stress, Distress & Trauma Series has 15-30 minute presentation that all personnel may find useful; organizational leaders may find the sessions on Self-Care and Organizational Care and Decision Fatigue especially helpful. The other resources on the page are also good as are the resources on the page behind this. Additional free resources to increase understanding of the child behind the behavior can be found on Mona Delahooke's website (www.monadelahook.com). Dr. Kristie Prettie-Frontczak has a multitude of free resources for teachers from podcasts to support their understanding of what is going on beneath the behavior to practical and evidence based tools (<https://prekteachandplay.com/>). Dr. Ross Greene has two websites with resources to support teachers: <https://livesinthebalance.org> and <https://truecrisisprevention.org/> Harvard's Center on the Developing Child is another source for free resources. <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/> Lori Desautels, who is one of the authors of the Indiana SEL competencies created a document 100 Days of Neuroscience (<https://workplaceservices200.fidelity.com/mybenefits/navstation/navigation>), a tool teachers can use to teach students about the brain. This approach has been useful for students to identify when they are starting to have emotional dysregulation challenges, so that they can seek help early before behaviors get out of hand. Indeed, knowledgeable students help each other. There are additional free resources on Dr. Desautel's website including an IEP sample seen through an ACES lens. <http://revelationsineducation.com/> While there are many, many other excellent resources, the ones I've listed are immediately accessible and free.

I understand that underfunding of the school system at the state and federal level is a major issue and I will continue to advocate for both!

It was so disappointing to see what appeared to be magnificent steps forward with the General Assembly actions and funding, only to have almost all of it unfunded by the pandemic. On the other hand, the historic changes for Pre-K are proceeding, the Department has expanded Virtual Virginia, despite this not making it out of the General Assembly, gaps in technology and access have been identified and funding has been provided to address at least some of those gaps.

Thank you!

Beth Tolley, Parent, Grandparent



February 14, 2020

Dr. James F. Lane
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Virginia Department of Education
Monroe Building, 101 N. 14th Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Dr. Lane:

At the Virginia Board of Education meeting on January 23, 2020, you and members of the Board asked for information regarding the impact on community college CTE students, should the postsecondary Perkins Act allocation be reduced from 15 percent to 10 percent.

I write to summarize the impact and to request an opportunity for a VCCS representative to address the Board of Education in more detail on this topic at its meeting on March 19, 2020.

This policy change would have immediate and substantial impact on postsecondary CTE programs at community colleges statewide. To appreciate this impact, it may be useful to consider factors including the following.

- Currently, only one state (Rhode Island) allocates less Perkins funding for postsecondary activities than Virginia. The postsecondary national average is 37.9%.
- Moving from 15% to 10%, effectively reduces VCCS postsecondary Perkins funds by 33%. In FY19-20 Virginia colleges received \$3,609,588. Assuming a reduction in the colleges' share to 10%, they would receive \$2,406,392 – a reduction of more than \$1.2 million.
- This reduction would drastically reduce our colleges' abilities to provide CTE programming, high school career coaching, dual enrollment CTE pathways, recruitment and support of nontraditional students, and compliance with federal mandates.

VCCS recommends that all stages of the workforce pipeline be adequately funded. Reduced postsecondary Perkins funding will significantly diminish our colleges' capacity to meet career and technical education students' needs, not to mention the needs of the businesses who hire them. It will likely result in a significant reduction in the number of high school career coaches, who currently serve CTE students in 185 high schools across the commonwealth.

We had hoped that the Board of Education would recognize that in today's economy, a high school diploma alone is not enough to ensure lifetime earnings power. We believe that to address the current and future demands of Virginia's workforce together, we should increase the share of Perkins funds for our colleges in order to ensure more students are able to pursue high quality career and technical education programs of study that meet the demands of today's businesses.

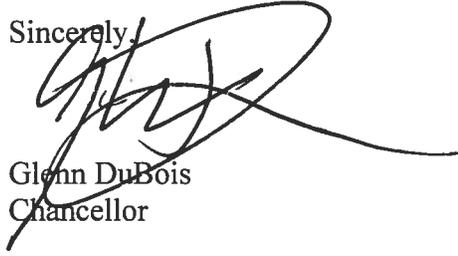
Dr. James Lane
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Research (state and national) makes clear that 2/3 of jobs in Virginia in the coming decade will require more than a high school diploma but less than a bachelor's degree. We hope to work in partnership with the Virginia Department of Education, the Board, and other stakeholders to achieve a vision where our CTE investments improve the size, scope, and quality of all CTE programs available to Virginians and meet the demands of Virginia's businesses.

I hope that you find this information helpful and that you will give favorable consideration to our request to share it your Board on March 19.

You can reach me at 804-819-4902, or at gdubois@vccs.edu.

Sincerely,



Glenn DuBois
Chancellor