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**Bill Number:** SB978 **Patron:** Hashmi Public elementary and secondary education; Office of

Bill Summary: Establishes several new programs and policies for the purpose of improving mathematics instruction and student learning outcomes in public elementary and secondary schools in the Commonwealth, including (i) directing the Department of Education (the Department) to establish the Office of Mathematics Improvement (the Office) as an office within the Department; (ii) directing the Director of the Office, in collaboration with the Department, to establish an Elementary School Mathematics Advisory Task Force, a Middle School Mathematics Advisory Task Force, and a High School Mathematics Advisory Task Force; (iii) creating several grant programs aimed at incentivizing, encouraging, and expanding opportunities for improving mathematics instruction for educators and mathematics learning outcomes for students, including the Summer Mathematics Intervention Grant Program, the Advance Placement Mathematics Exam Fee Elimination Fund and Program, the Mathematics Improvement and School Support Grant Program, and the Advanced Mathematics Teacher Incentive and Support Grant Program; (iv) making several changes to staffing requirements relating to teachers providing mathematics instruction, including creating a mathematics specialist microcredential program and establishing staffing ratios for mathematics specialists in public schools and permitting schools to use state funding appropriated to support meeting such staffing ratios to support teachers in completing the professional development or training necessary to receive the requisite licensure or endorsements; and (v) requiring the Department to expand the advanced mathematics courses offered through Virtual Virginia, as established pursuant to applicable law, for the purpose of ensuring that students attending public schools across the Commonwealth have access to a full range of advanced mathematics courses. The bill also (a) directs the Board of Education (the Board) to modify its regulations to increase the flexibility of receiving an Algebra I add-on endorsement for teachers; (b) directs the Board, in collaboration with the Office, to develop and approve a Geometry add-on endorsement for teachers; (c) requires the development and dissemination of various guidance documents for school boards and school counselors and online training programs and modules for educators relating to expanding and encouraging mathematics instruction and education, particularly advanced mathematics instruction and education; and (d) requires the Department to compile and post in a publicly accessible location on its website by August 1 of each year a report detailing the impact of the provisions of the bill on expanding mathematics offerings and improving mathematics learning outcomes in public schools across the Commonwealth. The bill provides timelines for modifying regulations to implement the provisions of the bill.

**Budget Amendment Necessary:** Yes **Items Impacted:** 117, 125

**Explanation:** This bill creates a new office within the Department of Education which would require funding for the positions required in the bill and additional funding to implement the

programs required in the bill also establishes new staffing standards for math specialists, which would require additional funding through Direct Aid to Public Education in

future biennia.

**Fiscal Summary:** DOE estimates a need for 13 new positions and additional funding estimated at \$2,218,278 general fund a year beginning in FY26. DOE also anticipates a need for \$36,500 per year starting FY26 to cover costs for advisory task forces established in the bill, \$70,000 one-time in FY26 to develop professional development materials, and \$210,000 one-time in FY26 and \$60,000 per year from FY27 ongoing to develop and facilitate a mircrocredential program. Funding for the new grant programs established in the bill could cost approximately \$8.4 million general fund beginning in FY27, but are dependent on appropriation. The cost to implement the staffing standards in this bill could cost a minimum of \$68.8 million per year for one school counselor for every 250 students (not included in table, see Fiscal Analysis below), \$56.5 million for one math specialist for every 550 students grades K-5, and an additional \$29.9 million for one math specialist for every 550 students grades 8. Any actual cost is indeterminate and dependent on rebenchmarking of the Direct Aid budget in future biennia.

#### **General Fund Expenditure Impact:**

<u>Agency</u>	FY2025	<u>FY2026</u>	<u>FY2027</u>	FY2028	<u>FY2029</u>	<u>FY2030</u>
197 (Direct Aid)	\$0			Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
			Estimated	\$65.1M based	\$95.0M based	\$95.0M based
		\$0	\$8.6M, actual	on FY26 data,	on FY26 data,	on FY26 data,
			indeterminate	actual	actual	actual
				Indeterminate	Indeterminate	Indeterminate
201 (DOE)	\$0	Minimum of	Minimum of	Minimum of	Minimum of	Minimum of
		\$2,534,778	\$2,314,778	\$2,314,778	\$2,314,778	\$2,314,778
TOTAL	\$0	Minimum of	Minimum of	Minimum of	Minimum of	Minimum of
		\$2,534,778	\$2,314,778	\$2,314,778	\$2,314,778	\$2,314,778

#### **Position Impact:**

<u>Agency</u>	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	<u>FY2028</u>	FY2029	<u>FY2030</u>
201 (DOE)	0	13	13	13	13	13
TOTAL	0	13	13	13	13	13

#### **Fiscal Analysis:**

#### Office of Mathematics Improvement

The bill directs DOE to establish an Office of Mathematics Improvement within the department and directs the office to be staffed with a director, a regional coordinator for each of the eight superintendent's region, two administrative positions, a professional development coordinator, and a data analyst. To meet these requirements, DOE would need an additional 13 positions at a total estimated cost of \$2,218,278 general fund per year beginning FY26, which includes salary, benefit, and technology costs. This assumes a salary of \$142,800 for the Director, a salary of \$106,000 for each regional coordinator, a salary of \$85,000 for the data analyst, a salary of \$106,000 for the professional development coordinator, and a salary of \$60,000 for the administrative positions.

### Mathematics Advisory Task Forces

The bill directs DOE to establish three new task forces, the Elementary School Mathematics Advisory Task Force, the Middle School Mathematics Advisory Task Force, and the High School Mathematics Advisory Task Force. Each of these task forces is directed to have at a minimum 8 members, likely more, and to meet at least four times a year. The bill directs that task force members shall be reimbursed for expenses. Reimbursements for task force members could cost an estimated \$36,500 general fund per year and costs would increase if additional members are appointed to each task force.

#### **Grant Programs**

The bill establishes the Summer Mathematics Intervention grant program with funds that may be appropriated to begin in FY27. The bill directs that the aggregate amount of grants awarded to each eligible school board under this program shall not exceed \$4,000,000 in fiscal year FY27 and the maximum award amount shall be increased during rebenchmarking based on inflation. It's not clear if the intent is to cap all awards under the program at \$4,000,000 in FY27 or to cap awards to each school board at \$4,000,000 in FY27. The table above assumes a program cap of \$4,000,000 in FY27. Any actual impact would depend on the amount appropriated.

The bill establishes the Mathematics Improvement and School Support grant program with funds that may be appropriated to begin in FY27. The bill directs that no more than \$3,400,000 million shall be allocated for these grants. Any actual impact would depend on the amount appropriated.

The bill establishes the Advanced Mathematics Teacher Incentive and Support grant program with funds that may be appropriated to begin in FY27. The bill directs that no more than \$1,000,000 a year shall be allocated for these grants. Any actual impact would depend on the amount appropriated.

The bill directs that DOE shall develop and make available application materials, procedures and guidelines for the above grant programs regardless of if they are funded in the appropriation act. This will take additional staff time in FY26 and can be absorbed by the agency.

The bill establishes the Advanced Placement Mathematics Exam Fee Elimination fund and program beginning FY27. The bill directs that DOE shall transfer to local school division a sum sufficient to cover all fees for eligible students for whom an application was submitted. Language would likely need to be added to direct that transfer to be subject to available appropriation. Based on data from the College Board, 1,582 students identified as economically disadvantaged took an AP math exam in 2024 in Virginia. At a cost of \$99 per exam, \$158,816 would need to be provided to cover the costs for all of these students. Any actual impact for this program would depend on the amount appropriated.

#### Virtual Virginia

The bill directs that with such funds as may be appropriated, DOE shall provide for the expansion of advanced mathematics courses offered through Virtual Virginia. At this time it not possible to estimate the cost to

expand courses offered, since this would depend on what courses DOE includes that are not already available through Virtual Virginia. Any actual impact would depend on the amount appropriated.

### **Instructional Materials**

The bill directs DOE to develop instructional materials and online training programs and modules to prepare teachers for six courses that are available to students to take a substitute for Algebra II to earn an Advanced students diploma, including Trigonometry, Computer Mathematics, Probability and Statistics, Discrete Mathematics, Mathematical Analysis, and Data Science. DOE would be required to develop and distribute an instructional guide with curriculum frameworks, best practices, and assessment strategies, as well as by April 1, 2027, online training programs for each course. DOE anticipates the need for \$70,000 one time in FY26 to hire consultants to develop these materials. This assumes 700 hours of work at a cost of \$100 an hour.

#### Staffing Standards

This bill establishes a new staffing standard for mathematics specialists beginning in the 2027-2028 school year (FY28) and updated in the 2028-2029 school year (FY29). The actual impact of this staffing standard is indeterminate and would be based on the Direct Aid to Public education budget as rebenchmarked for future biennia. DOE estimates, based on the current Direct Aid budget, that if the 2027-2028 staffing standard of one specialist for every 550 students in kindergarten through grade 5 were implemented in FY26 there would be a state cost of \$56.5 million. If the 2028-2029 staffing standard of one specialist for every 550 students in kindergarten through grade 8 were implemented in FY26, there would be an additional state cost of \$29.9 million, or \$86.4 million for the full expanded staffing standard.

The bill states that it shall be the goal of the Commonwealth for each school division to employ school counselors at a ratio of one counselor per 250 students, but does not update the requirement from the current ratio of one counselor per 325 students; therefore, state funding would still be based on the current ratio of 1:325 unless revised. If the staffing standard of one counselor per 250 students is funded in FY26 there would be an additional state cost of \$68.8 million per year. This cost is not included in the summary table above. Any impact in future years is indeterminate and would depend on the Direct Aid to Public education budget as rebenchmarked for future biennia and any actual change to the state-funded staffing ratio.

Local school divisions would have to provide the local share required to match any additional state funds received based on each division's local composite index. The actual fiscal impact to local school divisions is indeterminate at this time.

#### Microcredential program

The bill establishes a micro credential program to allow teachers to earn a series of micro credentials in the mathematics specialist endorsement area. The bill requires a performance – based assessment. DOE anticipates that consultants will need to be hired to build the microcredential series. Based on development costs for previous microcredential series DOE estimates a one time cost of \$210,000 general fund in FY26 and an ongoing cost of \$60,000 general fund a year for ongoing facilitation.

**Other:** This bill is identical to HB1829 as introduced.