Department of Planning and Budget
2025 General Assembly Session
State Fiscal Impact Statement

Bill Number: HB2158E   **Patron:** Carr
Bill Title: Department of Corrections; establishment of general system of schools for incarcerated individuals; Virginia Prison Education Task Force.

Bill Summary: Requires the Superintendent employed by the Department of Corrections (the Department) to oversee the operation of all educational and vocational programs in all institutions and community-based programs for adults operated by the Department to implement a consistent education program across all state correctional facilities that shall include a (i) functional literacy program for inmates testing below a selected grade level, which shall be at least at the eighth grade level and include evidence-based literacy instruction; (ii) secondary and adult education program for inmates testing between an eighth and twelfth grade level that includes a program to prepare for the high school equivalency examination established by the Board of Education; and (iii) postsecondary education program that provides access to coursework sufficient to earn a Uniform Certificate of General Studies; an associate degree; and postsecondary credentials, certifications, and licenses. The bill also requires the Director of the Department to enter into interagency agreements with the Chief Information Officer of the Virginia Information Technologies Agency, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Chancellor of the Virginia Community College System to support the development, implementation, and administration of the education programs. The bill requires the Department of Corrections to (a) reduce the waitlists for the education programs within five years of the programs' implementation; (b) implement the postsecondary education program in every state correctional facility by July 1, 2030; (c) implement the functional literacy program by January 1, 2027; and (d) enter into the interagency agreements required by the bill by January 1, 2026. Additionally, the bill requires the Department of Human Resource Management to, by November 1, 2025, (1) review and update the salary schedules for teachers licensed by the Board of Education and employed by the Department of Corrections to provide instruction in the schools of the correctional centers to be competitive with those in effect for the school division in which the correctional facility is located and (2) make recommendations for the inclusion of such teacher salary increases in the appropriation act. The bill also establishes the Virginia Prison Education Task Force for the purpose of implementing a consistent education program across all state correctional facilities. The bill requires the Task Force submit a report to the Governor and General Assembly by November 1 each year beginning on November 1, 2026, and to complete its work by July 1, 2030.

Budget Amendment Necessary: No   **Items Impacted:**   N/A
Explanation: See below

Fiscal Summary:

The Department of Corrections (DOC) reports that this proposal would require several one-time purchases and involve ongoing costs. The one-time expenses would be purchasing classroom trailers, laptops, and Smart

Boards; upgrading the wi-fi access and network across DOC facilities; and staff training. The ongoing costs of this proposal would be additional corrections officers and support technicians as well as network maintenance and security. Due to the proposal's enactment clauses, its fiscal impact would not begin until FY2027.

General Fund Expenditure Impact:

Agency	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029	FY2030
Dept. of Corrections			At least $7.1 million	At least $3.2 million	At least $10.3 million	At least $6.4 million
TOTAL			**Indeterminant**	**Indeterminant**	**Indeterminant**	**Indeterminant**

Position Impact:

Agency	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029	FY2030
Dept. of Corrections			At least 40	At least 40	At least 80	At least 80
TOTAL			**Indeterminant**	**Indeterminant**	**Indeterminant**	**Indeterminant**

Fiscal Analysis:

Under the provisions of this bill, the DOC would be required to provide consistent post-secondary-level programming that must be available at every facility, establish a Virginia Prison Education Task Force to oversee implementation of the bills proposed changes, reduce waitlists for education programs, and codify inter-agency partnerships in support of the Governor's EO36.

DOC reports that it does not currently have enough space to provide consistent post-secondary education programs across all facilities. It would need to purchase 40 classroom trailers (one per DOC facility) to have enough space to house the lessons. Purchasing the trailers and furnishings for the trailers would be a one-time cost of $5,000,000. DOC also reports that laptops and Smart Boards would have to be purchased so digital resources can be accessed in the classrooms. 800 laptops (40 per facility) would be a one-time cost of $520,000 and 40 Smart Boards would be a one-time cost of $160,000. In addition to learning space and equipment, DOC reports that staff training would be required to ensure the effective use of technology. This training would be a one-time cost of $120,000 per DOC. Further analysis is needed to determine start-up and on-going costs of educational material for the curriculums of the various programs.

To support digital and online learning, DOC reports that it would need to upgrade network infrastructure and establish secure Wi-Fi access at each facility. This includes a one-time cost for installation and ongoing expenses for maintenance and security updates. DOC estimates initial one-time upgrades would cost $2,000,000 and on-going cost for network maintenance and security would be $40,000 per year. Additional analysis is needed to determine the precise network improvement needs of each facility.

The proposal requires a post-secondary education program in every DOC facility by FY2030. The table above assumes that half of the one-time startup costs for facilities, equipment, and IT infrastructure would be needed in FY2027 and the other half would be needed in FY2029.

To meet the operational and instructional requirements of the proposal, DOC reports that it would need to hire 60 additional Correctional Officers (CO's) and 20 Program Support Technicians. These positions would provide administrative support for the expanded postsecondary educational programs. The CO's would cost $4,876,020 ($81,267 per CO) and the Program Support Technicians would cost $1,511,600 ($75,580 per Technician). The table above assumes one half of the positions would be needed in FY2027 and the other half would be needed in FY2029.

The table only includes expenses associated with the initial funding and recurring costs of post-secondary education programs. DOC already has funding at each facility for functional literacy programs. Per DOC, it can realign existing resources to reduce the functional literacy program waitlists.

Any fiscal implications to DOC as a result of a Department of Human Resource Management study on the appropriate salary levels for DOC teaching staff is indeterminate.

The fiscal impact to the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) is limited if DOC is required to cover tuition costs for individuals enrolled in community college courses, or that utilize community college faculty, staff, and resources to deliver instruction. The per credit hour tuition and mandatory fee rate varies by college from $165.95/credit-hour to $196.36/credit-hour for in-state domiciled students. Annual tuition, assuming 30 credit hours of instruction, ranges between $4,979 and $5,891 per year. It is unknown if correctional inmates might be eligible for federal Pell Grant funding which would offset this cost.

The Virginia Information Technology Agency (VITA) and Department of Education (DOE) report this proposal will not have a material fiscal impact on the operation of either agency.

Other: None