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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 40

Offered January 14, 2026

Prefiled January 14, 2026

Directing the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study the accuracy of Standards of Quality compliance reports from local school divisions across the Commonwealth. Report.

Patron—Webert

Committee Referral Pending

WHEREAS, Article VIII, Section II of the Constitution and Chapter 13.2 of Title 22.1 of the Code of Virginia provide for Standards of Quality in elementary and secondary education for all local public school divisions; such Standards of Quality encompass the learning and administrative requirements of the Commonwealth, including for instructional programs, staffing ratios, accreditation and other standards and assessments, student achievement and graduation, quality of classroom instruction and educational leadership, school board policies, and compliance reporting; and

WHEREAS, since 2005, each local school board in the Commonwealth is required to annually self-report its compliance with the Standards of Quality to the Board of Education and self-certify such responses, with each standard requiring complete compliance in order for a school board to respond affirmatively to compliance, and where no partial compliance response option is available; such report is submitted to the Board of Education by the chair of the local school board and the division superintendent; and

WHEREAS, in an October 2020 report on the Department of Education (the Department), the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) reviewed the process by which the Department assesses and certifies local school board compliance with the Standards of Quality and recommended several improvements to the Department's processes, including more detailed reporting and independent verification of self-reported data, additional monitoring of compliance for school divisions that are implementing corrective action plans, and additional analysis of compliance data; and

WHEREAS, as of the 2020 report by JLARC, the Department's Office of Policy had one employee to oversee data compliance collection for the entire Commonwealth, and the Department lacks additional staff to implement independent verification of data, additional monitoring of schools, or oversight in regard to reporting or compliance with corrective action plans for divisions that report noncompliance with certain standards; and

WHEREAS, JLARC's recommendations led to the Standards of Quality Compliance Pilot Program, an initiative of the Department that was implemented during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years, and the resulting 2023 report by the Department on the Standards of Quality Compliance Pilot Program affirmed the findings and recommendations that JLARC previously stated in the 2020 report; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of changes in instructional methods to provide for online learning or a combination of in-person instruction and online instruction to students due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in increased burdens on teachers and administrators, and subsequent complications in recent years such as higher rates of teacher shortages, may have resulted in inaccuracies in reported data regarding the provision of required instructional time, the quality of classroom instruction, or other standards of quality; any such inaccuracies reported by local school boards, whether intended or unintended, could lead to negative impacts on the quality of education that students receive; and

WHEREAS, it would be prudent for JLARC to thoroughly study and update their 2020 report on Standards of Quality compliance, with a specific focus on reporting accuracy following the 2023 Pilot Program Report from the Department and recent additional investments the Commonwealth has made in public elementary and secondary school education to ensure children are receiving the highest quality education; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission be directed to study the accuracy of Standards of Quality compliance reports from local school divisions across the Commonwealth.

In conducting its study, JLARC shall (i) review recommendations and observations provided in the 2023 report from the Department on the Standards of Quality Compliance Pilot Program and evaluate any changes that the Department has made following the Pilot Program to further improve the accuracy of self-reported data and ensure compliance; (ii) evaluate the current data collection method for self-reported compliance data and suggest potential improvements, including streamlining questions for clarity and to eliminate any redundancies and providing nuanced compliance response options with open-ended feedback fields to allow for contextual explanations regarding such responses apart from corrective action plans; (iii) determine and update recommendations on any additional number of part-time or full-time employees needed to assure

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59 accuracy in self-reported compliance data and estimate the funds necessary and the sources of funding for
60 such recommendations; and (iv) provide any other recommendations or suggested methodologies to improve
61 and ensure the greatest possible accuracy for Standards of Quality compliance data.

62 Technical assistance shall be provided to JLARC by the Department, the Board of Education, and all local
63 school boards. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to JLARC for this study, upon
64 request.

65 The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2026,
66 and the chair shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its
67 findings and recommendations no later than the first day of the 2027 Regular Session of the General
68 Assembly. The executive summary shall state whether JLARC intends to submit to the General Assembly
69 and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate
70 document. The executive summary and report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the
71 Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall
72 be posted on the General Assembly's website.