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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 205

Offered March 2, 2026

Commemorating the legacy of Laurel Grove School.

Patron—McGuire

WHEREAS, 2026 marks the 145th anniversary of the Laurel Grove School, a one-room schoolhouse that served Black students in the Franconia area of Fairfax County since the land was deeded in 1881 through 1932; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1880s, a congregation of freed Black farmers who held church services near a grove of laurel off Beulah Road in Fairfax County endeavored to build an institution for educating area children; and

WHEREAS, with a half-acre of land donated by formerly enslaved farmers William and Georgiana Jasper and lumber and materials provided by area residents, the trustees of the congregation built a single-room schoolhouse to serve as the Laurel Grove School, one of only 11 schools for Black students in the Fairfax County school system at the time; and

WHEREAS, since Fairfax County did not provide funding for teachers at Laurel Grove School until 1886, the Laurel Grove School community banded together to hire teachers and gather resources to ensure that students in grades one through seven received a quality education; and

WHEREAS, through the dedication of its teachers and the support of the community, the Laurel Grove School transformed countless students' lives by imparting valuable knowledge and skills at a time when an education was not readily available; and

WHEREAS, the Laurel Grove School taught students for nearly a half-century before it was closed and absorbed into Fairfax County's segregated dual public school system in 1932; and

WHEREAS, the Laurel Grove School Association was established in 1999 to restore the former Laurel Grove School's building, the last remaining one-room schoolhouse that was part of Fairfax County's segregated school system, and operate the site as a living museum; and

WHEREAS, the efforts of the Laurel Grove School Association and the Laurel Grove School Museum have helped to preserve the history of the Laurel Grove School and to celebrate its place in Fairfax County's story; and

WHEREAS, in pursuit of its mission, the Laurel Grove School Association first developed the "Teaching with Laurel Grove" curriculum in collaboration with George Mason University's Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media and the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, and it now works directly with elementary school teachers to bring tailored lessons about the history of Laurel Grove School into local classrooms; and

WHEREAS, the Laurel Grove School stands today as a symbol of hope, resilience, and empowerment, and its legacy will continue to inspire the citizens of the Commonwealth for many generations to come; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the legacy of Laurel Grove School hereby be commemorated on the occasion of its 140th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Laurel Grove School Association as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for Laurel Grove School's history and appreciation for its contributions to Fairfax County and the Commonwealth.

INTRODUCED

HR205