The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), implements the Board of Education's (BOE) statutory responsibilities. This includes utilizing existing formulas in the Standards of Quality (SOQs) and Local Composite Index approved by the General Assembly (GA) to calculate state and local funding shares during even years (Dickey, 2013, slide 13-14).

Governor: with insight from the BOE, DPB, and the Cabinet, the Governor introduces biennial budget, also known as the (1) Budget Bill, (2) the State Budget, or (3) in its finalized form, the Appropriation Act / Virginia Act of the Assembly, an Act for all appropriations of the Budget (Tweedy, 2018, p. 3,6 and personal communication with lobbyist, Jeff Palmore, June 13, 2019).

Odd Years: in odd years, the VDOE participates in “rebenchmarking,” a process that updates inputs prescribed in the previous year’s GA approved Standards of Quality (SOQs) and Local Composite Index formulas to adjust state and local funding shares for future budgets (Dickey, 2017, slides 3-4). If necessary, the BOE (sometimes, with the support of the Governor and political appointees) might also suggest revisions to the SOQs for GA approval (Code of Virginia, § 22.1-18.01)
K-12 Education in Virginia, Key Policy Drivers

Local Government

In response to massive resistance and school integration, the Education Article VIII, was added to the Virginia Constitution in 1971 (Delia, 2004, p. 191). It called for Standards of Quality for all public elementary and secondary schools to be developed by the BOE and approved by the GA (Article VIII, section 2).

Local School Boards can either be appointed by a board of supervisors/city council, or elected via a popular vote. Boards typically consist of 5-9 members, and serve four year terms (no term limits; VA Code, Title 22.1, Chapter 5). School Boards implement school laws and regulations, negotiate teacher contracts, create school calendars, make provisions for textbooks, furnish the divisions annual report to the BOE, and support curriculum development (Administrative Code, Title 8, Agency 20, Chapters 490 and 720).

Local Superintendents are appointed by the division’s school board. Their initial term is two to four years, and subsequent terms are no more than four. This is determined by the school board, and contracts must end on June 30 (VA Code, Title 22.1, Chapter 6 § 22.1-60).

Superintendents act as liaisons between the division and the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Additionally, they enforce school laws, explain processes, inspect schools, supervise teachers, and promote appreciation for local educators (Administrative Code, Title 8, Agency 20, Chapter 396).

Local Government - Executive Branch

The Board of Education (BOE) is a joint commission of nine members appointed by the Governor (Article VIII, section 4). No member can be appointed to more than two consecutive four-year terms (VDOE, n.d.).

The BOE consists of nine members appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the GA. Members are appointed to serve a term of four years (VA Constitution, Article VIII, section 4). No member can be appointed to more than two consecutive four-year terms (VDOE, n.d.).

The BOE sets forth K-12 policies (e.g., changes to Standards of Quality) that must be approved by the GA. The BOE has several standing committees, one of which is the Local Education and Health Planning Councils. These councils are connected to state agencies to develop and execute the Commonwealth's budget (Department of Planning & Budget, n.d).

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPE), often called the “State Superintendent,” oversees the Virginia Department of Education (PK-12), and serves as the secretary of the BOE (VDOE, n.d.). The SPE is appointed by the Governor and serves during the duration of their term. (VA Constitution, Article VIII, section 6).

The Superintendent of Public Instruction’s budget is created with input from the Governor and is subject to the Governor's approval. The budget is then submitted to the GA for approval. The Governor's cabinet holds the power to approve or reject the budget, but the GA has the final say.

The Secretary of Education is an appointed member of the Governor's cabinet and holds the office for the duration of the Governor’s term (The Center for History, n.d.). The Secretary of Education provides guidance informing the administration's education and budgetary priorities. Additionally, the Secretary helps to facilitate interagency efforts to improve Virginia’s education system agencies and strengthen the Commonwealth's cultural institutions (Code of Virginia, § 22.2-208).

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) “provides the staff and other resources to implement the constitutional and statutory requirements placed on the Board of Education.” (Administrative Code, Title 8, Agency 20, Agency Summary).

The Department of Planning and Budget (DPB) is an executive agency under the Secretary of Finance that works with Governor’s Office, the General Assembly, and other state agencies to develop and execute the Commonwealth’s budget (Department of Planning & Budget, n.d).

Bills are referred to GA Committees and Subcommittees during legislative sessions. Bills must be voted on within committees before being considered by the entire House or Senate (Virginia Public Access Project, n.d.; VA Constitution, Article IV, section 11). Notable standing committees in the Senate are Finance and Appropriations and Education and Health, and in the House, Appropriations and Education (Virginia Public Access Project, n.d.).

The General Assembly serves as Virginia’s legislative branch and meets once a year to deliberate bills, enact laws, and elect judges. The House of Delegates consists of 100 total members, serving two year terms, with no term limits (VA Constitution, Article IV, section 3). The Senate consists of 40 total members, serving four-year terms, with no term limits (VA Constitution, Article IV, section 2).

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) is a joint commission of the GA that ensures appropriated funds are used effectively and efficiently by state and local agencies (Code of Virginia § 30-58.3, Code of Virginia § 22.1-25). It also conducts major research studies to provide explicit legislative authority, they leverage their influence to champion bills and introduce budgets, working with Delegates, Senators, and Committee Chairs to influence the legislative agenda. The Governor serves a four-year term. They may serve a second term, but two terms may not be served consecutively (VA Constitution, Article V, section 1).

Through the Governor does not have explicit legislative authority, they leverage their influence to champion bills and introduce budgets, working with Delegates, Senators, and Committee Chairs to influence the legislative agenda. The Governor serves a four-year term. They may serve a second term, but two terms may not be served consecutively (VA Constitution, Article V, section 1).

The Governor’s term (The Center for Government Study, n.d.)

The Governor sets forth the State’s legislative agenda. The Governor can veto legislation, or temporarily codify through Executive Order, permanently codify through legislation, or temporarily codified through legislation with a sunset clause.

Members of Boards, Commissions, and Advisory Councils are often appointed by the Governor. Some (e.g., the Board of Education) oversee particular programs while others are advisory in nature. These groups may be temporarily established through Executive Order, permanently codified through legislation, or temporarily codified through legislation with a sunset clause.

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References


