

## **HJR 637 (2007): Joint Subcommittee Studying Childhood Obesity in Virginia's Public Schools**

### **November 13, 2007 - Meeting Summary**

The Joint Subcommittee Studying Childhood Obesity in Virginia's Public Schools held its final meeting of the 2007 interim on November 13, in Richmond, with Delegate O'Bannon as chair.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the subcommittee's final recommendations for the 2008 General Assembly session. Staff presented each of the five proposals the subcommittee had discussed at the previous meeting, the members held some discussion, and public comment was heard. The following is a summary of the action taken on each proposal.

#### **Expanded Competitive Food Restriction**

This proposal would have closed the gap between the breakfast and lunch periods, during which schools are currently not allowed to sell anything that is not part of the official school breakfast or lunch program. The subcommittee took no action on this proposal.

#### **Best Practices Database**

This proposal requires the Board of Education to develop a database containing information on successful nutrition and physical activity programs and policies being implemented by individual local school divisions. The information would be made available to all local school divisions, and no local school division would be required to submit information.

The subcommittee members were supportive of trying to encourage positive behavior without legislative mandates. The proposal was amended to include information on fitness testing results already being done, and reported to the Department of Education, by the majority of school divisions, and to make the information available to the Department of Health, in addition to local school divisions. The subcommittee voted to recommend this proposal as amended.

#### **Mandatory PE Requirement, K-12**

This proposal would require at least 150 minutes of physical education per week for all students in grades kindergarten through 12. The requirement could be fulfilled through physical education classes, or other extracurricular sports or activities that the local school board deems appropriate.

While the subcommittee was generally supportive of increasing the physical education requirement, some members were uncomfortable with the financial effect this

would have on school divisions and the scheduling impact for students, particularly in high school. The subcommittee ultimately agreed to two amendments to the proposal. The proposal would now be gradually phased in at the elementary level over the next 5 years, and recess cannot be counted towards the weekly requirement. The subcommittee voted to recommend the proposal as amended.

### **Budget Amendment to Increase State Reimbursement Level for School Lunches**

With little discussion, the subcommittee voted to support this recommendation to increase the state reimbursement level for school lunches, which has not been increased in over 25 years.

### **Resolution/Letter Encouraging Participation in Governor's Nutrition and Physical Activity Scorecard Program**

The subcommittee also quickly voted to recommend both a resolution and a letter to all division superintendents encouraging local school divisions to participate in the Governor's Nutrition and Physical Activity Scorecard.

Finally, the subcommittee agreed to recommend a resolution continuing the study for another year.