

HJR 25 2006

Science, Math, and Technology Education in the Commonwealth at the Elementary, Secondary, and Undergraduate Levels

4/30/07 Meeting Summary

At the first meeting of the 2007 Interim Staff Attorney Patrick Cushing reviewed the requirements and scope of the HJR 25 study and summarized the work of the joint subcommittee in 2006. The staff presentation on HJR 25 and a list of meeting summaries from 2006 can be found on the HJR 25 website hosted by the Division of Legislative Services (DLS):

(<http://dls.state.va.us/groups/TechEd/meetings/2007meetings/2007meetings.htm>).

Dr. Robert Starr, Program Manager, NASA Digital Learning Network (DLN), demonstrated the distance learning network by connecting with the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas. Members of the joint subcommittee were able to communicate in real-time with NASA engineers and get a quick overview of the "Planet Hopping" educational program. Dr. Starr continued his presentation highlighting the history of the DLN program and its growth over the past three years. The joint subcommittee was interested in learning why Texas had the highest concentration of classes and students. Dr. Starr responded that although NASA funds the DLN program, the state of Texas has entered into a contract with NASA to provide DLN classes. The joint subcommittee thought this might be a potential option for Virginia. Dr. Starr's presentation is available on the DLS website linked above.

Prior to the next presentation, staff attorney Patrick Cushing and staff attorney Nikki Seeds reviewed federal and state legislation relating to STEM education. Mr. Cushing reviewed the America COMPETES Act (S.761) and the 10,000 Teachers, 10,000,000 Minds Act (HR.362), both of which have recently passed their respective houses of introduction. Ms. Seeds reviewed three bills enacted by the 2007 Session of the General Assembly:

1. HJR 611: study resolution that creates a joint subcommittee to study math, science, and technology education in business, law, and policy graduate programs.
2. HB 1681/SB 749: creates a two-year college transfer grant program.
3. HB 2039/SB 1147: establishes a technical diploma option for high school students.

Eva Hardy, Executive Vice- President of External Affairs and Corporate Communications, Dominion Virginia Power, presented to the joint subcommittee expressing the need for qualified engineers at Dominion and other workforce challenges. In addition to STEM graduates, Ms. Hardy identified a lack of trained workers and external labor specialists needed to build and maintain power generation plants and transmission and distribution facilities, especially with the oncoming retirement of a significant portion of Dominion's workforce. Dominion has initiated its own efforts, mainly through an expanded internship program and in-house training, to find and

produce qualified employees. Ms. Hardy's presentation is available on the DLS website linked above.

Public Comment Period

During public comment period the joint subcommittee heard from three speakers.

David Hagan and Deborah Hamilton, Virginia Association of Science Teachers, presented on the need to recruit, train, and retain math and science teachers in Virginia's K-12 education system. Mr. Hagan and Mrs. Hamilton's comments are available on the HJR 25 website.

Speaker Pollard, Christian Barton, representing the Virginia Math and Science Coalition, offered his assistance to the joint subcommittee. Mr. Pollard has worked extensively with the Department of Education on the K-8 Math Specialist Program.

Jesse Wyte, President Elect, Virginia Technology Education Association, commented on the need for STEM education to become a greater part of a student's curriculum.

Delegate Cosgrove concluded the meeting with a discussion on the 2007 workplan. Delegate Cosgrove requested each member of the joint subcommittee to email staff with a list of ideas they would like to pursue in greater detail, based on the presentations heard during the previous five meetings. Staff will consolidate the ideas and present a work plan for the final three meetings, with the possibility of forming smaller workgroups to address specific issues in greater detail.