

Virginia Association for Career & Technical Education Legislative Report 1-19-2026

The 2026 Virginia General Assembly convened on January 14, 2026, marking the start of what promises to be a consequential 60-day legislative session. With Democrats now holding expanded majorities in both the House and Senate and control of the executive branch following the November 2025 elections, the session opened with aggressive early action on high-profile priorities.

House and Senate members were quickly engaged: committee hearings began, and several key deadlines were set. Member budget amendment filings were due January 16, just two days after the session began. The final deadline to introduce regularly filed bills is January 23. We will continue to see any remaining legislation filed and posted over the next week. Additionally, legislators are working toward Crossover Day on February 17, 2026, the statutory deadline by which the House must act on House bills and the Senate on Senate bills if they are to continue advancing. The formal session is scheduled to adjourn March 14, 2026, with a reconvened session on April 22 to consider gubernatorial vetoes and amendments.

A centerpiece of the first week was the swift legislative approval of four constitutional amendments that will now go before Virginia voters. These amendments, which passed both chambers during the opening days of session, include protections for abortion and reproductive healthcare, automatic restoration of voting rights for people who have completed felony sentences, marriage equality, and a controversial congressional redistricting for Virginia.

Under Virginia's constitutional process, these measures must be approved in two consecutive General Assembly sessions with a House election in between, which they have now done, and then be placed on the ballot for a statewide referendum. The redistricting amendment is expected to appear in a special spring 2026 referendum, possibly as early as April. If approved by voters, it would allow the legislature to redraw congressional districts outside the normal decennial cycle.

The Public Education Program (PEP) state budget amendments were submitted this week by Delegate Betsy Carr and Senator Dave Marsden. The amendment seeks to appropriate existing Department of Health (VDH) funds for the sole purpose of utilizing the discounted PEP advertising. The amendment would direct VDH to use \$75,000 of their budget, in collaboration, with OAAV, to run various health related advertising campaigns. As we continue to build support among General Assembly members and the new administration, our priority is to ensure this collaboration with VDH is the first of many working partnerships with state agencies.



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In addition to our budgetary priority, there are several bills currently being monitored and are included below in this report. I would specifically like to draw your attention to House Bill 649, patroned by Delegate Cliff Hayes, who is a supportive of the association's PEP. The bill provides some procedural reinforcement for billboard owners, clarifying local governments cannot authorize volunteers to remove outdoor signage as defined in the code.

To conclude, the first week of the 2026 session set a fast pace for lawmaking in Richmond. With major deadlines on the horizon, a reshaped political balance, and consequential policy questions headed for the ballot, lawmakers face intense pressure in the weeks ahead to translate campaign promises into enacted law.

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Bill	Catch line	Legislation Status	Chief Patron
HB53	Student bullying; adjusts definition, characteristics of victim.	In Committee	Cole, J.G.
HB132	Graduation with an advanced studies diploma; requirements, complet. of Int'l Baccalaureate diploma.	In Committee	Simon
HB138	Public high schools; career coach required	In Committee	Simonds
HB171	Student instruction; internet safety, policy to include key modern digital safety topics.	In Committee	Askew
HB178	Public schools; student support services, student personal information and data security, report.	In Committee	Anthony
HB180	Work-Based Learning Coordinator Pilot Program; established, report, sunset.	In Committee	Anthony
HB189	Certain student assessment requirements; calculation of final course grade.	In Committee	Convirs-Fowler
HB206	College partnership laboratory schools; transparency.	In Committee	Keys-Gamarra



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HB279	Teachers; timeline and process for increasing salaries to at least national average.	In Subcommittee	Clark
HB298	Public elementary or secondary school students; evidence-based restorative disciplinary practices.	In Committee	McQuinn
HB299	SOL assessments and related assessment methods; development, administration, scoring, and release.	In Committee	Helmer
HB332	Teacher licensure; three-year license to teach career and technical education, etc.	In Committee	Rasoul
HB412	Local governing bodies; school division budgets, funding levels.	In Committee	Cole, N.T.
HB428	High school graduation requirements; alternative pathway to standard diploma established, report.	In Committee	LeVere Bolling
HB478	Diploma seal for excellence in fine arts; established, industry-recognized workforce credential.	In Committee	Watts
HB551	Nondegree workforce training programs; accreditation.	In Committee	Anderson
HB595	Advanced studies diploma; requirements for graduation, approval for certain credit requirements.	In Committee	Simonds
HB643	Board of Education; School Performance and Support Framework; certain changes required.	Committee Referral Pending	Rasoul
HB647	Board of Education; Regulations Governing Allowable Credit for Teaching Experience; certain credit substitution allowance permitted.	Committee Referral Pending	Kent
HB698	Virginia Workforce Development and Career Connection and Training Foundation and Fund.	Committee Referral Pending	McAuliff
HB753	Public school funding; composite index of local ability-to-pay.	Committee Referral Pending	Runion
HB785	Teacher licensure; three-year license to teach career and technical education, etc.	Committee Referral Pending	Austin
HB849	Public school employees; suspension; notice and opportunity for a hearing.	Committee Referral Pending	Cousins
HB1039	Department of Education; College and Career Ready Virginia Program; administration; advisory committee and work group composition.	Committee Referral Pending	Carr
HJ7	High school graduates; Dept. of Workforce Dev. & Advancement to study optional service year program.	In Committee	Helmer
SB90	Equity in public school funding and staffing; at-risk Program established, standards of quality.	In Subcommittee	Favola
SB102	School boards; high school courses or dual enrollment programs for certain certifications.	In Subcommittee	Stanley
SB105	STEM+C Competition Team Grant Program; eligibility for grants.	In Subcommittee	Stanley
SB108	School boards; student cell phone and smart device possession and use policies, prohibition.	In Subcommittee	Pekarsky
SB117	Public school teachers; reemployment of teacher who has not received continuing contract status.	In Subcommittee	Pekarsky
SB134	Public education; early childhood care and education, funding formula calculations, report.	In Subcommittee	Locke
SB147	Alternative graduation pathways to earn Standard Diploma; development, approval, and implementation,	In Subcommittee	Pekarsky
SB151	Elementary school students; water safety instruction required, guidelines.	In Subcommittee	Craig



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<u>SB203</u>	Teacher licensure; career and technical education or dual enrollment; three-year licenses.	In Subcommittee	Suetterlein
<u>SB217</u>	National Board Certification Incentive Reward Program and Fund; eligibility.	In Committee	Boysko