



LIFT UP YOUR VOICE: TELL LEGISLATORS TO FUND OUR SCHOOLS REGIONAL BUDGET HEARINGS

What are regional budget hearings?

Each January, the General Assembly's House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees hold public hearings to receive comments about the Governor's budget priorities. The purpose of the 2020 budget hearings will be to receive public feedback about the Governor's proposed 2020-2022 state budget.

The proposed budget would direct state resources to needed staffing and services in Virginia schools, **yet it falls far short** of what it will take to fairly and adequately fund our schools as identified by the Virginia Board of Education this fall. *This is a fantastic opportunity to speak directly to your elected representatives and demand full and fair funding for Virginia's public schools.*

When and where will the hearings take place?

Regional hearings will take place on **Thursday, January 2, 2020**, at the following locations:

Northern Virginia – George Mason University, Hylton Performing Arts Center, Gregory Family Theatre (10960 George Mason Circle, Manassas, VA 20109) – Begins at 10:00 a.m.

Blacksburg – Virginia Tech, Classroom Building, Room 206 (1455 Perry Street, Blacksburg, VA 24060) – Begins at 10:00 a.m.

Hampton Roads – Old Dominion University, Virginia Modeling, Analysis and Simulation Center (1030 University Blvd., Suffolk, VA 23435) – begins at 12:00 noon

Richmond – J. Sargeant Reynolds Parham Road Campus, Workforce and Conference Center (1651 E Parham Rd., Richmond, VA 23228) – begins at 12:00 noon

For more logistical information, check out <http://sfc.virginia.gov>.

How can I make my voice heard?

Here are some tips for effective advocacy:

1. You should sign up at the location no more than one hour before the start of the hearing. You may register only one speaker at the time, and speakers will be taken in the order of registration.
2. Introduce yourself with your name and where you're from.
3. Use the following Fund Our Schools talking points to guide your testimony:
 - Strong, well-supported public schools are vital for our children, our families, and our economy.
 - The new K-12 investments in the proposed budget do not fulfill Virginia's constitutional obligation to ensure that every child receives a high-quality education.
 - The Virginia Board of Education has declared that Virginia schools are underfunded and has asked for more than \$2 billion in additional investments over the biennium.
 - The proposed budget offers only about \$550 million in new funding over the biennium. The small proposed teacher salary increase brings us no closer to the national average for teacher salaries when we take into account the cost of living, and for many teachers this is functionally a pay cut.
 - The support position cap continues to starve local school divisions of vital personnel to help meet student needs.
 - We ask you to fully fund the prescribed Standards of Quality and to repeal the support position cap.
4. Add your personal story! This is your chance to speak directly to our elected officials about why school funding are important to you, your family, and your community.
5. Limit your comments to three minutes or fewer. This is about how long it takes to read one page of typed text.
6. Let us know about your experience! If you make a public comment at a budget hearing, we'd love to hear about it: send an email to brionna@justice4all.org.

How can I continue to advocate for Virginia's public schools?

For more information about Fund Our Schools, visit www.FundOurSchoolsVA.org.