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For Immediate Release

Statement on Governor Northam's Proposed Budget

Governor Northam's K-12 budget is being announced as a major \$1.3 billion investment in our public schools. The proposed budget would direct state resources to needed staffing and services in Virginia public schools, yet it falls short of what it will take to fairly and adequately fund our schools as identified by the Virginia Board of Education this fall.

The new investments, totaling \$550 million, are directed toward critical areas of need for Virginia students, including additional school counselors and English Learner teachers in our schools. The proposal also takes on issues of equity in school funding. The proposed increase to the At-Risk Add-On would make a meaningful difference for improving equity through directing resources to school divisions in our highest poverty communities. While the announced budget priorities move the needle on school funding, our Commonwealth still has a long way to go to ensure that every student in every zip code has access to a high-quality education.

The total new investments in the Governor's budget represents less than half of the amount of what the Virginia Board of Education recommended this fall. Of the \$1.3 billion in K-12 funding announced today, we note that more than \$800 million would go toward rebenchmarking, a required budgeting process that adjusts current funding levels for inflation and changes in school enrollment. These funds are not new investments into our schools. The Board's proposed revisions would have gone further to ensure adequate staffing and fair allocation of resources and would have totaled an increase of \$2 billion above rebenchmarking in the upcoming biennium.

Fund Our Schools recognizes that building a 21st century school system in Virginia will involve increasing our capacity as a state to make new investments in our children's future. It will require everyone to pitch in their fair share for us to build a strong education system and economy where everyone comes out ahead.

We look forward to working with advocates, communities, lawmakers, and the Governor's office to make additional improvements to our K-12 funding.



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