

VIRGINIA HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
**House Republican Caucus**  
POLICY WORK GROUP



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## **House Republican Caucus Unveils K-12 Public Education Agenda for the 2012 Session**

**RICHMOND, VA** – The House Republican Caucus was joined by Bill Thomas, Associate Vice President of Hampton University, for their weekly Policy Work Group press conference, this week discussing various K-12 initiatives the Caucus has introduced this session. Following the press conference, the Policy Work Group issued the following statement:

“Last year our Caucus worked with Governor McDonnell investing in the future of Virginia’s higher education system. Through structural improvements and targeted investments, we laid the groundwork to ensure Virginia’s public colleges and universities remain among the most competitive in the nation,” said Majority Leader Kirk Cox (R-Colonial Heights). “This year, we will continue our efforts to improve Virginia’s education system, with particular emphasis paid to our public K-12 institutions. Improving access, increasing accountability and encouraging innovative alternatives are key to improving our public schools,” he continued.

The press conference featured various proposals from members of the House Republican Caucus, including a proposal from Delegate Jimmie Massie (R-Henrico), which would permit corporations to sponsor educational improvement scholarships for lower income children – particularly those in underserved areas of the Commonwealth.

“[House Bill 321](#) would improve the education of thousands of Virginia’s most disadvantaged children, improve our public schools and save the Commonwealth’s taxpayers millions of dollars,” said Massie. “Existing models, including Florida’s long-standing, eleven-year scholarship tax credit program, have proven all three of these points. I will be working closely and tirelessly with the Governor and the Senate to provide Virginia’s families with this important educational choice over the coming weeks,” he continued.

Republicans hope to reform Virginia’s system of teacher contracts. Performance-based teacher incentives were introduced last year by Governor McDonnell, and Delegate Richard Bell (R-Staunton) intends to build on last year’s initiative during the 2012 Session with [House Bill 576](#).

“In business, we demand performance and accountability from executives and workers alike,” said Delegate Bell. “For the sake of our children, we must require the same results-oriented approach for our teachers and administrators. We entrust these individuals with the critically important job of educating our children, and as a former teacher I’m well aware of the hard work and good results many of our teachers put in. We would simply like to implement fair, common-sense metrics to ensure all our schools and all our teachers are working for our children,” said Bell.

Delegate Chris Peace (R-Hanover), host of the weekly Caucus press conference, also discussed [House Bill 765](#), which would allow any institution of higher education in Virginia to operate a college partnership laboratory school.

“In 2010, the General Assembly passed legislation enabling public colleges and universities in Virginia to team with approved teacher-preparation programs in an effort to establish college partnership laboratory schools throughout the Commonwealth. This legislation would permit more partnerships between Virginia’s higher educational institutions and K-12 public divisions, in turn increasing choices for K-12 students statewide,” said Peace. “Laboratory schools allow local divisions to offer greater opportunities for innovative instruction and assessment methods – customizing and improving the educational experience for all of our students. Providing educational options through utilizing the strengths and talents at the Commonwealth’s colleges and universities are necessary steps toward assuring academic success for our youngest citizens.”

The House Republican Caucus Policy Work Group will hold a press conference each Monday at 11:00 am.

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