

Committee on Joint School Services
Update to Covington City Council
January 7, 2020

- **Consensus on school board composition – 2/2/3.** Two members elected from Covington City, two members elected from Alleghany County, and three members elected at-large. Action required by General Assembly to allow at-large voting across jurisdictional boundaries.
- **Fiscal analysis of both school divisions is complete.** Evaluation of the document is ongoing, but preliminary assessments have found only minor discrepancies.
- **A facilities assessment is planned.** The committee is currently considering options for a broad facilities assessment that would include all existing school facilities as well as athletic venues.
- **Sub-committees will be formed and utilized.** Sub-committees comprised of Committee members and various school administration/personnel will be used to accomplish many of the required tasks outlined in § 22.1-25; specifically subsections C2, C3, C5, C6, and various parts of subsection D.

§ 22.1-25. How school divisions made.

A. The Board of Education shall divide the Commonwealth into school divisions of such geographical area and school-age population as will promote the realization of the standards of quality required by of Article VIII, Section 2 of the Constitution of Virginia, subject to the following conditions:

1. The school divisions as they exist on July 1, 1978, shall be and remain the school divisions of the Commonwealth until further action of the Board of Education taken in accordance with the provisions of this section except that when a town becomes an independent city, the town shall also become a school division.
 2. No school division shall be divided or consolidated without the consent of the school board thereof and the governing body of the county or city affected or, if a town comprises the school division, of the town council.
 3. No change shall be made in the composition of any school division if such change conflicts with any joint resolution expressing the sense of the General Assembly with respect thereto adopted at the session next following January 1 of the year in which the composition of such school division is to be changed.
- B. Notice of any change in the composition of a school division proposed by the Board of Education shall be given by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, on or before January 1 of the year in which the composition of such school division is to be changed, to the clerks of the school board and of the governing body involved and to each member of the General Assembly.
- C. Subject to the conditions set forth in subsection A, the Board of Education shall consider the following criteria in determining appropriate school divisions:

1. The school-age population of the school division proposed to be divided or consolidated.
2. The potential of the proposed school division to facilitate the offering of a comprehensive program for kindergarten through grade 12 at the level of the established standards of quality.
3. The potential of the proposed school division to promote efficiency in the use of school facilities and school personnel and economy in operation.
4. Anticipated increase or decrease in the number of children of school age in the proposed school division.
5. Geographical area and topographical features as they relate to existing or available transportation facilities designed to render reasonable access by pupils to existing or contemplated school facilities.
6. The ability of each existing school division to meet the standards of quality with its own resources and facilities or in cooperation with another school division or divisions if arrangements for such cooperation have been made.

D. Consistent with the authority of the Board pursuant to Article VIII, Section 5 of the Constitution of Virginia to designate school divisions in the Commonwealth of such geographic size and school-age population as will best promote the realization of the standards of quality, local school boards may submit proposals for the consolidation of school divisions to the Board of Education. Prior to the submission of a consolidation proposal, the submitting school board shall give notice to the public and shall conduct one or more public hearings.

School divisions submitting proposals for consolidation shall include such information and data as may be necessary to support their proposal, including (i) the criteria set forth in subsection C; (ii) evidence of the cost savings to be realized by such consolidation; (iii) a plan for the transfer of title to school board property to the resulting combined school board governing the consolidated division; (iv) procedures and a schedule for the proposed consolidation, including completion of current division superintendent and school board member terms; (v) a plan for proportional school board representation of the localities comprising the new school division, including details regarding the appointment or election processes currently ensuring such representation and other information as may be necessary to evidence compliance with federal and state laws governing voting rights; and (vi) evidence of local support for the proposed consolidation.

For five years following completion of such consolidation, the computation of the state and local share for an educational program meeting the standards of quality for school divisions resulting from consolidations approved pursuant to this subsection shall be the lower composite index of local ability-to-pay of the applicant school divisions, as provided in the appropriation act.