

## **McDonnell Education Strategy's 65-Percent Component Not Credible**

The Education Plan jointly announced by Bob McDonnell and Bill Bolling is based on the false contention that only 61% of Virginia's school funding goes to instruction and that shifting 4% of the funds to instruction will provide \$500 million to benefit students and teachers. The statistical basis of their assertion is dated (2007) federal data and the basic contention is not supported by research.

The press release from McDonnell/Bolling, which is still on the McDonnell web-site reads as follows:

*“Out of every dollar we put to education, only 61 cents is going directly to the classroom for our children and teachers. This is unacceptable and it will change under the McDonnell/Bolling administration.*

*By raising the average for classroom spending by 4%, we will put roughly \$480 million more dollars in the classroom annually when fully implemented.*

*This will mean real money to recruit and retain the best and brightest teachers, which is critical to a great education for our children. With \$480 million more dollars in the classroom, we will be able to increase pay for the best teachers, and ensure that teacher salaries are equal to or better than our neighboring states.”*

The proposal to provide “Almost Half a Billion Dollars More Per Year for Virginia's Teachers and Students” is a hollow promise, pure and simple. According to the latest figures from our own state department of education (Superintendent's Annual Report 2007-2008), 88 of our school divisions already are spending at the 65% level. In fact, the state averages 64.55% spent on instruction. So, the McDonnell/Bolling answer to the need to attract and retain the best and brightest teachers and to improve instruction in Virginia is to move less than one-half of one percent of existing funding from one spending category to the other. It would have no impact at all in 88 of our 132 school divisions.

Campaign mail pieces are being sent to households in each locality in Virginia stating the total amount which will go to the classrooms in that locality. There are two huge problems with these pieces. The information is wrong and the underlying assertion that moving 4% of existing funding within the local school budget will make a difference is false. First, it is false because 0.45% is the real figure - not 4%. Second, Standard and Poor's has studied this issue and found that, “The data reveal no significant relationship between instructional spending at 65% ... and student performance.”

Please read the S&P report:

<http://admin.schoolmatters.com/SMResourceHandler/resourcehandler.res?rtype=file&rpId=45162536&flnm=The%20Issues%20and%20Implications%20of%20the%2065%20Percent.pdf>

Interestingly, Republican gubernatorial candidates in Illinois, Iowa, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Ohio used 65 percent proposals in their platforms. All were defeated.

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