

— ALERT — Capitol Contact 2020 Virginia General Assembly	 Virginia Association of Counties 1207 E. Main Street Suite 300 Richmond, VA 23219 804.788.6652 www.vaco.org #VACoCapitolContact
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Wednesday, September 23, 2020

Capitol Contact ALERT – Support Hold-Harmless Budget Language for K-12 Direct Aid Based on Enrollment

According to information provided to VACo by the Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS), local school divisions could be facing a potential reduction of more than \$153 million in K-12 Direct Aid used to fund personnel, instruction, and other essential services needed for the education of Virginia’s children. VACo strongly urges the General Assembly to adopt hold-harmless language for FY 2021 that would protect against drastic decreases in average daily membership (ADM) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ADM is used in part to calculate Direct Aid payments to school divisions and is reflective of student enrollment. Due to the uncertainties and extraordinary challenges of providing K-12 education brought about by COVID-19, superintendents anticipate a significant drop in Fall Membership enrollment, which in turn could lead to a significant reduction in state funding as early as January 2021.

Action Required – Contact your [House Appropriations](#) and [Senate Finance and Appropriation](#) Members today to support budget language that would hold school divisions harmless against significant decreases in ADM.

KEY POINTS

- School divisions are facing unprecedented challenges and conditions which could impact enrollment numbers until pandemic conditions improve and more students re-enroll.

- If reductions in Direct Aid are implemented, many school divisions will be forced to make difficult choices. These could result in staff furloughs or layoffs, reduction of support services crucial to student health and well-being, and reduced capacity to return to in-person instruction.
- As Direct Aid funding based on ADM has already been budgeted for in Governor Northam's budget proposals, new funding would not be required in order to protect school divisions from drastic reductions in critical state aid, only budget language.
- Budget Language must be added, **now**, during the Special Session as potential decreases in semi-monthly Direct Aid payments to local school divisions could happen as early as January 2021, which would occur before any action could be taken by the General Assembly during the regular 2021 session to address the issue.
- In order to forestall potential reductions in K-12 services and preserve the instructional capacity of our school divisions to return to in-person instruction as pandemic conditions improve, hold-harmless language protecting against temporary declines in ADM is essential.

VACo recently sent a [letter](#) to Committee Members outlining our concerns on this issue.
Contact your legislator now to support hold harmless ADM budget language.

KEY CONTACTS

House Appropriations: [Torian \(Chair\)](#), [Sickles](#), [Plum](#), [Tyler](#), [Bulova](#), [McQuinn](#), [Carr](#), [Krizek](#), [Aird](#), [Hayes](#), [Hurst](#), [Jones](#), [Reid](#), [Cox](#), [Knight](#), [Morefield](#), [Fariss](#), [Rush](#), [Davis](#), [Austin](#), [Bloxom](#), [Brewer](#)

[House Appropriations Committee](#) – Email entire committee

Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee: [Howell \(Chair\)](#), [Saslaw](#), [Norment](#), [Hanger](#), [Lucas](#), [Newman](#), [Ruff](#), [Vogel](#), [Barker](#), [Edwards](#), [Deeds](#), [Locke](#), [Petersen](#), [Marsden](#), [Ebbin](#), [McClellan](#)

[Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee](#) – Email entire committee

[House of Delegates](#) | [Senate of Virginia](#)

VACo Contact: [Jeremy R. Bennett](#)