



The League of Women Voters School Choice Task Force

LWV-VA Fall Workshops, Fredericksburg
22 September 2017

1. Why a School Choice Task Force?

- Forces of possible change in Federal requirements and options
- U.S. Sec. of Education supports funds for vouchers
- How do options affect funds for our public schools?
- Governor candidate supports increasing school choice options
- Do options maintain separation of church and state?
- Advocacy tools needed for 2018 legislation

2. League positions: outdated or nonexistent

- LWVUS: Zero on charter schools
- LWVUS: Voucher position per coalition with NCPE
- LWVUS: Opposes Tuition Tax Credit programs

3. LWV-VA on Quality Education (2003)

- “Support opportunities to select a specific program or school. These opportunities should be based on a system of equity so that all qualified students have equal access.”
- **No statement on charter, voucher or tuition tax credits.**

4. What are School Choice options in Virginia today?

You have heard of Charter and Vouchers and Online learning.

What about:

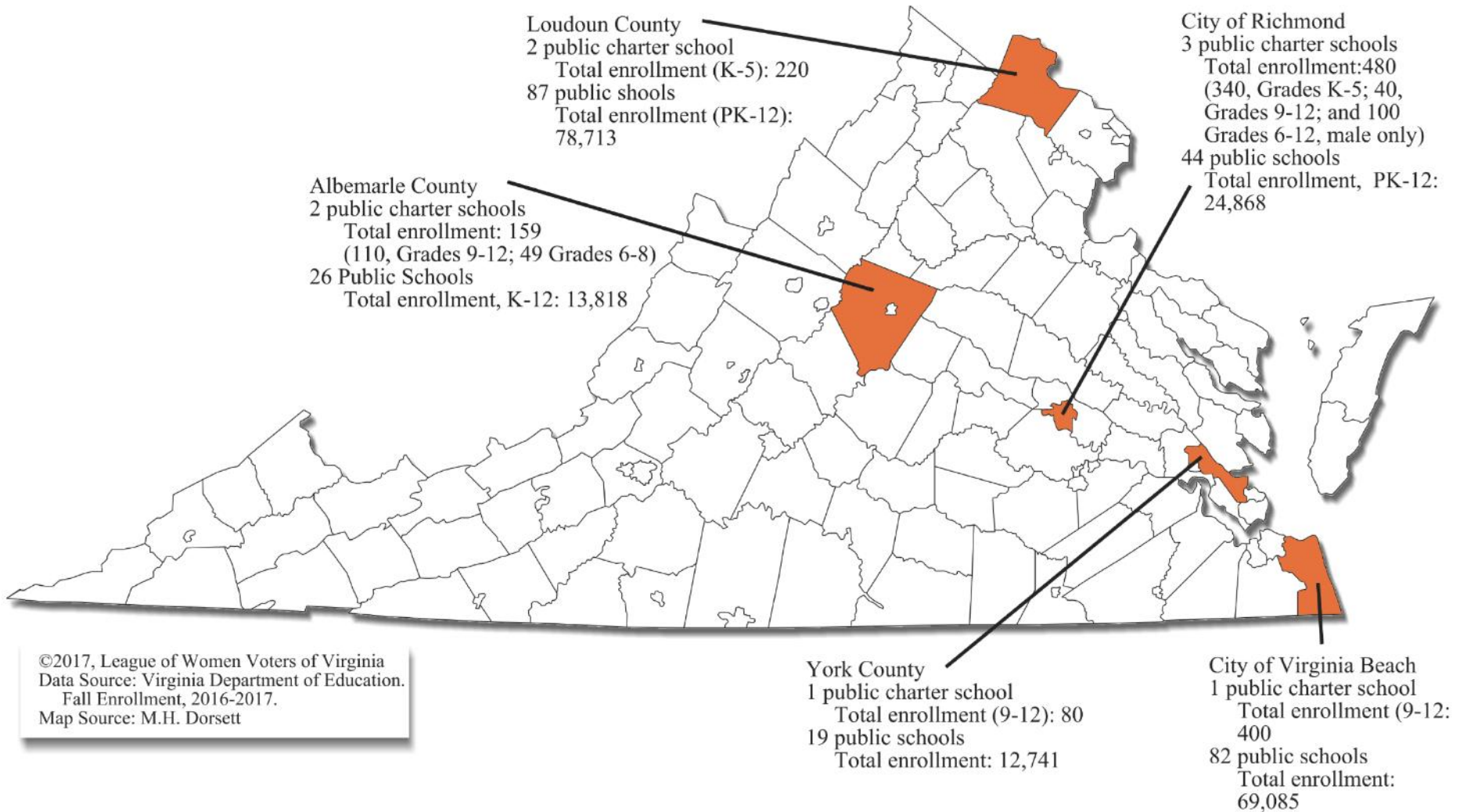
ESA? EISTC? VVA? VAVA? K12Inc?

\$\$\$ How are options funded? \$\$\$

5. Charter Schools in Virginia

- Public, approved by local school divisions, robust approval process
- Parameters and reporting requirements are extensive
- Thorough DOE regulations and oversight
- How many? _____ How many students? 1339

Distribution of Public Charter Schools in Virginia, 2017



7. Task Force emphasis: Not Charter Schools

- Charter School option in VA well-managed
 - More concern with other options
- BUT...Monitor legislation to expand Charter schools
- Would allow VBOE to overrule local charter denial
 - Would set up Regional board to "go around" local denial

8. Vouchers *aka* ESA \$\$\$

- “Educational Savings Account” for individual student **NOT** allowed in Virginia (no law passed yet)
- \$\$\$ leave local school district to go to individual (PP from SOQ)
- Constitution issue: Public funds could go to sectarian school
- US Constitution says...
- VA Constitution says....
- 2017 Legislation: Passed House & Senate. Veto.
- Campaign \$\$\$ in 2017 for Governor: \$100,000

9. What IS that SOQ? \$\$\$

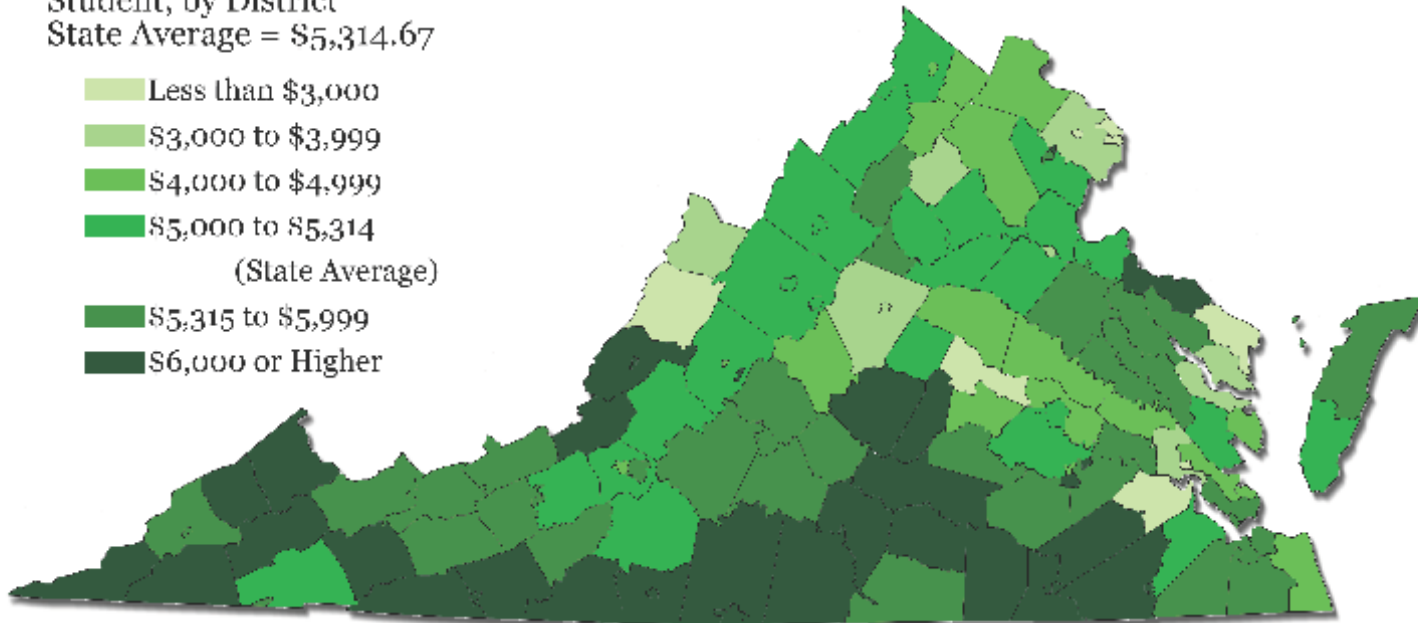
- Local district's share of state funds per pupil
 - Local funding average about 55% state and 45% local
But... Loudoun = 80% local; Lee = 16.92% local
- “Local ability to Pay” formula -> Index
- Considers 3 sources of local revenue:
1. Property Value
 2. Adjusted Gross Income
 3. Local Sales Tax

SOQ State Share Funding Per Pupil

Estimated Program Year: 2017-2018

SOQ Funding Per Student, by District
State Average = \$5,314.67

- Less than \$3,000
- \$3,000 to \$3,999
- \$4,000 to \$4,999
- \$5,000 to \$5,314
(State Average)
- \$5,315 to \$5,999
- \$6,000 or Higher



Data Source: Virginia Department of Education
Map Source: M.H. Dorsett

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SOQ money could “follow” the student to Charter, ESA, Virtual School

11. Tuition Tax Credits (TTC): Big discovery for Task Force! \$\$\$

- EISTC (Educational Improvement Scholarship Tax Credit)
- Donor -> Foundation -> School -> Student
- 42 Scholarship Foundations approved by VDOE/BOE
- Donor chooses Scholarship Foundation
- Donates \$500 up to \$125,000; Receives Virginia Tax credit (65%)
- SF sends donation to a private school; school disburses fund to student
- Targets at-risk children \leq 300% Federal Poverty Level

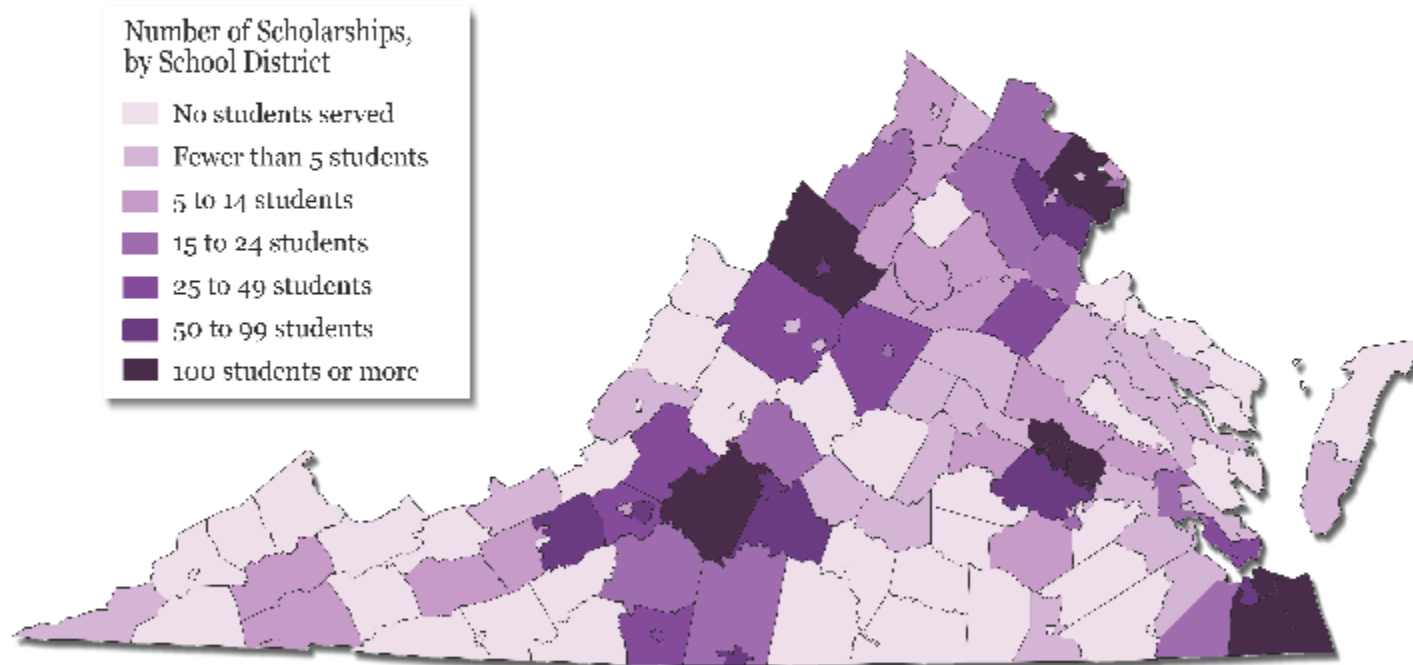
12. Who are the 346 Donors in FY2015?

Examples of Income Levels and Donation Total

- 11 with FAGI less than \$50,000 = \$10,648 Total
- 11 with FAGI = \$2,000,000 or more = \$593,437

Educational Improvement Scholarship Tax Credit Program (EISTC)

Number of Students Who Received a Scholarship, by School District, FY 2016 (n=2882)



Data Source: Virginia Department of Education, 2017
Map Source: M. H. Dorsett

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2882 students in 139 schools.
Total amount disbursed: **\$7,390,530.15**

League of Women Voters,
September 2017

14. Why EISTC? What is the Attraction?

- Quote by financial advisor:
“I love the fact that the EISTC program allows my clients to help a charity and also help themselves at the same time. The tax benefits are fantastic, *especially for those with high incomes*. The EISTC program is a win-win for everyone. My client gets a tax benefit, the education program gets much needed funds, and I win brownie points with my clients for bringing the program to their attention!” [Everyone?]
- Donor says, **“...you almost make money on the donation.”**

15. Legislation to Expand EISTC \$\$\$?

- Increase annual cap from \$25 million.
- Increase credit from 65% to 90%
- Expand to make more kids eligible (pre-K, 400% FPL if disabled)

16. Virtual learning

- Meets special needs
- Public: Virtual Virginia (VVA)
- Private: Virginia Virtual Academy (VAVA)
- Vendors authorized as Multidivision Online Providers (MOP)
- Offered to local school divisions
- May vary from one course to a full curriculum

17. Availability Equity?

- Reliable internet & computer access available?
- Available to low income families?
- English language learners?
- Participation equity for at-risk students?

18. Virtual Accountability?

- Does MOP ensure integrity of student's work and testing?
- Reporting of completion and passing rates – is data reliable?

19. Virtual education: For-Profit Companies

- Receive public school funds
- Promote private education agenda
- Lobby and contribute to campaigns and legislators
- Market programs extensively

20. Next Steps: Quick and Nimble

- Your feedback
- Prepare for 2018 Legislation
- DRAFT Standards and Talking Points

21. Gratitude & Sources

1. Holly Coy: Deputy Secretary of Education
2. Dr. Todd Gathje, Department of Education
3. Chris Duncombe, The Commonwealth Institute
4. Meghan Dorsett, Mapmaker Guru, LWV-VA
5. VPAP: Campaign donation data
6. NCPE: National Coalition for Public Education
(Voucher Talking Points)
7. McMahan Parater Foundation
<http://richmonddiocese.org/office/mcmahan-parater-foundation/>
<http://www.catholicvirginian.org/?p=3335>