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2026 Legislative and Community Issue

23 October 2025

Fairfax County Delegation to the 2026 Virginia General Assembly
CC: Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

Dear Fairfax Delegation Members,

With pleasure the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations (Federation) forwards the 16th annual Legislative Issues Package to the Fairfax delegation to the 2026 Virginia General Assembly, with copies to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. The Federation requests that you consider the issues, engage with us throughout the session, and explore opportunities to introduce or advance legislation that reflects the interests of Fairfax residents.

This year's Legislative Issues package includes 10 items adopted by our membership, representing the collective priorities of our committees on Citizens Associations Services, Conservation/ Environment, Education, and Human Services.

The issues with page number are as follows:

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We appreciate your ongoing partnership and commitment to the residents of Fairfax County. The Federation, now in its 85th year, remains dedicated to serving as a trusted voice for our citizens associations, providing a platform for collaboration, discussion, and solutions on issues that affect our neighborhoods and quality of life.

Please feel free to reach out to us if you would like to discuss any of these issues or explore ways to work together during the upcoming session.

Respectively submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Morgan W. Jameson".

Morgan Jameson
President
President@FairfaxFederation.org

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "William S. Barfield".

William S. Barfield
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Enclosure: Ten 2026 Legislative Issues



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<u>Issue ID & Title:</u>	26A01 - Additional Polling Places and Hours for Early Voting
<u>This Issue is for:</u>	☒ Fairfax County Delegation to the General Assembly ☐ Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
<u>Date Approved by Federation:</u>	23 October 2025
<u>Issue:</u>	Virginia needs to expand voting opportunities. Virginia law requires polls to open at 6:00 a.m. and close at 7:00 p.m. Statewide. There is limited statutory flexibility outside emergencies or court orders. This is about reducing waste, smoothing labor markets, and hardening civic infrastructure and not solely about disadvantaged communities who face long waiting times and frequent Election Day disruptions. Communities are especially hurt by rigid poll hours. Factory workers, small-business owners, truckers and they can't always make a 6–7 window either. When voting infrastructure breaks, everybody's side loses. BLS national estimate says 16% of wage-and-salary workers usually work a non-daytime schedule (evening, night, rotating, split, or irregular), or about 650,000 Virginia residents.
<u>Background:</u>	Virginia permits 45 days of in-person early voting. Fairfax County opens three main government centers and later expands to additional satellite sites, adding evening and weekend hours near Election Day to improve access and reduce lines. Best-practice guides from bipartisan and federal bodies emphasize resource planning to meet a “30-minute max wait” standard.
<u>Existing Conditions/Impacts:</u>	Peak-day lines remain above 30 minutes at high-volume sites, and several districts still have limited geographic coverage. Long waits reduce subsequent participation and confidence.
<u>Preferred Position:</u>	Extend close time to 8:00 or 9:00 p.m. during the final two weeks, paired with a requirement to measure and publish wait-time metrics at regular intervals on Election Day (so the change is evaluated by data, not vibes). Also, open new satellites in growth corridors based on historical turnout; guarantee at least two weekend days with extended hours at all locations; and publish real-time wait-time dashboards for voters. Extending voting hours is one suggested tool. The strongest evidence base is for <i>measuring and managing lines in real time</i> , and <i>rapidly curing site-specific failures</i> with legally authorized extensions where warranted.
<u>Benefits:</u>	• Shorter voting lines and smoother voter experience. • Improved access for commuters, caregivers, and people with disabilities. • Data-driven staffing that contains costs. Like several States (i.e., NY keeps polls open until 9pm) where statutes create explicit authority and criteria for extensions, administrators act quickly and defensibly. Where authority is ambiguous, litigation delays relief and creates uncertainty for counting late-cast ballots • Enhanced trust through transparent operations.
<u>Potential Supporters:</u>	League of Women Voters; disability and senior-advocacy groups; civic and faith organizations; chambers of commerce; County Office of Elections.



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2026 Legislative and Community Issue

Issue ID & Title:	26A02 - HOA Board Accountability
This Issue is for:	☒ Fairfax County Delegation to the General Assembly ☐ Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Date Approved by Federation:	23 October 2025
Issue: Virginia's Property Owners' Association Act (POAA) lacks a direct enforcement mechanism that delivers owner-centered relief when the Office of the Common Interest Community Ombudsman (CICO) determines an association acted contrary to law or its own documents. The Common Interest Community Board (CICB) can fine or issue cease-and-desist orders against an association, but penalties flow to the state fund, not to the harmed owner. No statute compels boards to cure violations or make owners whole. The result is compliant owners must self-finance litigation to obtain relief even after a favorable administrative determination.	
Background: The Ombudsman's office primarily assists and receives Notices of Final Adverse Decision yet it does not order restitution or specific performance. The CICB may assess civil penalties and issue cease-and-desist orders, and it may seek injunctions but these tools are for regulatory compliance, not for compensating owners or compelling a board to undo unlawful actions. In contrast to Virginia, in Montgomery County, MD, a county commission issues binding administrative orders enforceable in court with daily fines for noncompliance, and in new 2024 law, Prince George's County, MD, routes HOA disputes to a mandatory hearings with the county commission and rulings are binding. (This issue was submitted as 25A01 to the 2025 GA session.)	
Existing Conditions/Impacts: HOA members are frustrated with the lack of accountability of HOA Boards, as shown by the number of complaints appealed to the CICO. The State also fails to ensure that violators of the POAA should not use community resources to defend their personal violation of that statute. Prince George's County recently increased HOA accountability by requiring that violations be heard publicly by their oversight commission and that such ruling be binding. Virginia should employ similar actions.	
Preferred Position: Amend the POAA to hold HOA board members personally liable when they knowingly fail to comply with state and local laws or the HOA's Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CCRs). Ensure that an HOA complies with the requirement to address complaints through timely and fully transparent public hearings. Require that non-compliant HOAs be reported directly to the state ombudsman with additional scrutiny and potential for further enforcement actions by the state.	
Benefits: By requiring all complaints be adjudicated in public hearings and that HOA community insurance not be allowed to be used by individual Trustees/Directors who have violated the requirements of the POAA, this position provides paying members of HOA communities more control over their community funds.	
Potential Supporters (Community leaders, Public/Private Partnership Opportunities, Organizations): The more than two million Virginia residents live in roughly 9,100 HOAs in Virginia and who paid about \$2.4 billion in HOA assessments in 2021. With overly-restrictive, and expensive processes for updating the governing documents for individual HOA communities, this action would directly support transparency and accountability in these communities.	



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<u>Issue ID & Title:</u> 26A03 - HOA Notarization Requirements	
<u>This Issue is for:</u> <u> X </u> Fairfax County Delegation to the General Assembly <u> </u> Fairfax County Board of Supervisors	
<u>Date Approved by Federation:</u> 23 October 2025	
<u>Issue:</u> Grant relief to older Homeowner Associations (HOAs) wanting to amend their Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CCRs) so they can operate cost effectively and efficiently using digital capabilities in lieu of extant high quorums and notarized signatures in the 21st century. Virginia's notarial law, under the Virginia Notary Act (Virginia Code § 47.1-1 et seq.), allows for electronic notarization. However, its use is not directly tied to the amendment processes for HOA documents within the Virginia Property Owners' Association Act (POA) framework.	
<u>Background:</u> Many (40+ years old) Virginia HOAs desire to amend their dated CCRs to comply with current law, court rulings, technology, etc., but are burdened with requiring physical, notarized signatures from all members.	
<u>Existing Conditions/Impacts:</u> Current Virginia law typically subjects older HOAs to costly and laborious inefficient manual processes (i.e., collection of physical, notarized signatures from a specified percentage (quorum) of property owners (often 60-75%). The requirement for notarized signatures adds a significant burden to the amendment process (e.g., a layering of legal and notarial fees, hiring of external administrative support to track down homeowners, organize signing events, maintain records of signatures, and ensure compliance with legal requirements). Such a process becomes circuitous and self-defeating and obstructs the amendment process. As a result, important community updates to the CCRs - such as those addressing modern safety needs, technological advancements, or local regulatory changes - may be delayed or blocked, keeping the community from adapting to current standards. Recent cost estimates to comply exceed \$40,000. Other States have recognized the challenges associated with the notarization requirement and have implemented more streamlined digital processes. For example, California's Davis-Stirling Act allows for electronic voting on amendments to governing documents, reducing the time and effort required for HOAs to achieve quorum and secure member approval. Such changes have helped to lower costs, improve participation rates, and ensure that associations can respond more quickly to evolving community needs	
<u>Preferred Position:</u> We propose adding legislation that amends the POA (1) to allow electronic signatures, and (2) to authorize electronic voting for CCR changes to modernize the amendment process while preserving community involvement and transparency. The amendment process for CCRs in many HOAs is stipulated by provisions in the original HOA documents, which do not provide flexibility for electronic or digital means of collecting approvals.	
<u>Benefits:</u> A digital consent process will allow HOAs to gather electronic signatures, conduct virtual meetings, increase homeowner participation, and modernize Virginia's laws governing HOAs.	
<u>Potential Supporters (Community leaders, Public/Private Partnership Opportunities, Organizations):</u> Virginia lawmakers representing older HOAs; Housing and community development advocacy Organizations; Community Associations Institute	



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2026 Legislative and Community Issue

<u>Issue ID & Title:</u>	26C01 – Modified Vehicle Exhaust Noise
<u>This Issue is for:</u>	☒ Fairfax County Delegation to the General Assembly ☒ Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
<u>Date Approved by Federation:</u>	23 October 2025
<u>Issue:</u> Counties and cities in Northern Virginia lack effective tools to enforce laws meant to curb disruptive noise from cars retrofitted with illegal and excessively loud after-market mufflers.	
<u>Background:</u> As Northern Virginia has become more crowded, cars with mufflers <i>designed</i> to be loud – especially in residential neighborhoods and at late hours of the night – have become more than a mere nuisance. A bill (HB2550) was passed in the 2025 Session of the General Assembly that would have allowed counties and cities in Planning Districts 8 and 16 to run a pilot program using “sound cameras” to target noise violations by such cars. The Governor vetoed the bill.	
<u>Existing Conditions/Impacts:</u> Exhaust systems modified to be unusually loud are already illegal in Virginia. Many of these emit sound well over 95 dB, the standard in last year’s bill – equivalent to the noise from a subway train only 200 feet away. Noise ordinances typically prohibit this disruptive and aggravating level of noise, particularly near residential areas and at night. The problem is that noise ordinances and laws prohibiting noise-enhanced exhaust systems are almost impossible to enforce against a moving vehicle. By the time an officer arrives to respond to a complaint, the violator is long gone.	
<u>Preferred Position:</u> The Federation supports legislation to give localities, including Fairfax County, authority to deploy automated sound-measuring detectors capable of identifying excessively loud vehicles and to issue citations to the owners of the vehicles.	
<u>Benefits:</u> The proposed legislation would provide a narrowly focused and cost-effective tool to target a serious problem using technology that has been deployed in New York City, Newport, R.I., and elsewhere. Like speed cameras already in use throughout the region, automated sound detectors would identify a car causing a violation. The local police department would then mail a ticket to the owner, requiring payment of a fine with no points assessed against the owner’s license and no report to an insurance company.	
<u>Potential Supporters (Community leaders, Public/Private Partnership Opportunities, Organizations):</u> Fairfax County and other urbanized localities in Northern Virginia; neighborhood associations in those jurisdictions.	



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<u>Issue ID & Title:</u>	26C02 – Virginia Clean Vehicle Grant Fund
<u>This Issue is for:</u>	☒ Fairfax County Delegation to the General Assembly ☐ Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
<u>Date Approved by Federation:</u>	23 October 2025
<u>Issue:</u> In 2021, Virginia enacted a Clean Vehicle Grant Fund to help school districts transition to electric school buses. The original funding source was removed from the legislation, so the Grant Fund has never been activated.	
<u>Background:</u> Using school buses fueled by clean energy sources would advance Virginia’s energy and climate strategy. Fairfax County has committed to the goal of transitioning its fleet to carbon-neutral fuel sources by 2035. Electric buses offer significant economic, environmental, and public health advantages compared to diesel buses, including lower operating costs and zero tailpipe emissions. Their acquisition costs, however, are significantly higher. The Clean Vehicle Grant Fund would provide a mechanism to reimburse school districts for at least some of the costs of purchasing electric buses.	
<u>Existing Conditions/Impacts:</u> Del. Holly Siebold requested a budget amendment that would have transferred \$200,000 to the Fund in the 2025-2026 budget cycle. The money would have supported a working group tasked with establishing funding sources to support purchases of electric buses. The amendment was not adopted by the House Appropriations Committee.	
<u>Preferred Position:</u> The Federation supports legislation that would allocate money to the Clean Vehicle Grant Fund for the purpose of identifying suitable sources of long-term funding to carry out the purposes of the Fund.	
<u>Benefits:</u> Activating the Fund would accelerate a statewide transition to clean-energy school buses. That transition would advance the Commonwealth’s environmental objectives, save money for school districts, and deliver cleaner air for students in and around school buses.	
<u>Potential Supporters (Community leaders, Public/Private Partnership Opportunities, Organizations):</u> Fairfax County; Virginia Conservation Network; Sierra Club	



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Issue ID: 26C03 - Leaf Blowers Noise
This Issue is for: <u> X </u> Fairfax County Delegation to the General Assembly <u> </u> Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Date Approved by Federation: 23 October 2025
Issue: Gas-powered leaf blowers generate excessive noise in residential communities. The General Assembly should grant authority to localities (including Fairfax County) to regulate or phase out the use of gas-powered leaf blowers.
Background: Gas-powered leaf blowers have become a source of aggravation in residential neighborhoods. It is immediately apparent that they are extremely loud, to the point that it is unsafe to be near them without hearing protection. The noise they produce includes a low-frequency component that travels long distances and can penetrate walls. Gas-powered leaf blowers also produce excessive levels of air pollution, posing a danger to the workers who use them and people in neighborhoods where they are used. Battery-powered leaf blowers now provide a capable and economically viable alternative. They are quieter than gas-powered equivalents, and they produce no air pollution at the point of use. Local jurisdictions including Alexandria (pursuant to an opinion specific to that city from the Attorney General), Washington DC, and Montgomery County and several cities in Maryland have banned the use of gas-powered leaf blowers. (Submitted in 2024 as 25C01.)
Existing Conditions/Impacts: Virginia localities have authority to regulate noise generally. Under its current noise ordinance, yard maintenance equipment is subject to time-of-use restrictions but is otherwise categorically exempt from regulations that limit the amount of noise that can be produced, including in residential neighborhoods. Localities have no legal tools to address air pollution generated by leaf blowers or other yard equipment.
Preferred Position: The Federation supports enactment of legislation that would give local jurisdictions the authority to regulate or prohibit the use of gas-powered leaf blowers, putting the decision in the hands of affected communities.
Benefits: .Prohibiting the use of gas-powered leaf blowers would make our neighborhoods quieter, cleaner, and healthier. While the use of other gas-powered yard maintenance equipment (such as lawn mowers, string trimmers, and so forth) would not be restricted, removing just leaf blowers from the equation would by itself have a significant and beneficial effect.
Potential Supporters (Community leaders, Public/Private Partnership Opportunities, Organizations): Quiet Clean NOVA, Virginia League of Conservation Voters, Sierra Club



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<u>Issue ID:</u> 26E01 - Fighting the Effects of Poverty on Education
<u>This Issue is for:</u> <u> X </u> Fairfax County Delegation to the General Assembly <u> </u> Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
<u>Date Approved by Federation:</u> 23 October 2025
<u>Issue:</u> Additional funding is needed to help defray the higher costs associated with educating students who live at or near the poverty level, traditionally identified as those who receive Free and Reduced-Price Meals (FRM).
<u>Background:</u> Students who live at or near the poverty line are among those who are most at risk of educational failure. Low-income students often require additional instruction and remediation, and their lack of at-home resources and support place them at a well-documented disadvantage when they enter the classroom. Data show that these disadvantages grow into an achievement gap which has proven difficult to narrow, let alone close. Meeting these children's needs requires schools to spend extra time, attention, and other resources above and beyond what is needed for children with a higher socioeconomic background. (ref 25E01, 23E01, 22E01, 21E01, 20E01, 19E02, 18E02, 17E02)
<u>Existing Conditions/Impacts:</u> Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) serve a diverse student population. According to the latest figures from FCPS, approximately 36% of the total student population (approximately 65,600 students) qualified for FRM. This percentage has grown significantly since the 2009 recession, while overall state funding levels for K-12 education have declined in real terms. Title I federal funds (for children in poverty) make up little of the difference between children's needs and the funding required to meet those needs.
<u>Preferred Position:</u> We support legislation to provide increased Commonwealth-generated educational funding that addresses the unmet needs of students who live at or near the poverty level and therefore are eligible to receive FRM. Per-student funding can help provide these children with the resources they need to be successful, and would help similarly situated children throughout the Commonwealth.
<u>Benefits:</u> Targeting educational funding for students in poverty will help address the achievement gap that has long existed among students whose demographic characteristics vary significantly across the Commonwealth. In addition, by basing funding on a per-student basis, the Commonwealth will be able to direct these funds to at-risk children in all communities.
<u>Potential Supporters (Community leaders, Public/Private Partnership Opportunities, Organizations):</u> Educational organizations and county governments, particularly in areas with high poverty rates.



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Issue ID: 26E02 - Supporting the Expansion of Governor's Schools
This Issue is for: <u> X </u> Fairfax County Delegation to the General Assembly <u> </u> Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Date Approved by Federation: 23 October 2025
Issue: The Commonwealth must continue to provide our most academically gifted students with challenging programs beyond those offered in their home schools, while simultaneously promoting access to such programs for historically underserved students.
Background: Since the establishment of the Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSS&T) in 1985, the student population within Fairfax County Public Schools alone has grown by more than 43 percent. Yet TJHSS&T remains the only selective high school within the division designed to serve the Governor's School mission—to meet the needs of “students whose learning levels are remarkably different from their age-level peers.” Such population growth has increased competition for admission to TJHSS&T, even while FCPS grapples with difficult questions of how to ensure equitable access to gifted education. (ref 25E02, 23E02, 22E02, 21E02)
Existing Conditions/Impacts: We agree with the authors of a 2020 review of FCPS' Advanced Academic Program that “a school division the size of FCPS can support multiple selective high schools, lessening the ... focus on selection for [TJHSS&T].” Other large districts, such as Boston and New York City, have had success in establishing multiple selective high schools in order to support students who require differentiated instructional opportunities.
Preferred Position: The Commonwealth should establish one or more additional Governor's Schools in Fairfax County. This will help serve the growing number of students who benefit from these unique, challenging academic environments. While we are neutral about such schools' academic focus, we note that the proximity of Washington, D.C. could make Fairfax County well-situated to establish a school concentrating on government and international studies or, more broadly, humanities and the arts.
Benefits: Governor's Schools are a valuable asset to the communities in which they sit, providing a nurturing environment not only to gifted students themselves but an investment in tomorrow's leaders. When these schools are successful, they help retain and attract business investment as well. Local businesses and industries are designed to serve an important role in Governor's Schools, providing mentors, equipment and supplies, facilities, and expert advice.
Potential Supporters (Community leaders, Public/Private Partnership Opportunities, Organizations): Regional and local Economic Development Authorities, gifted organizations, county governments



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Issue ID: 26E03 - Analysis of COVID Policy for Schools
This Issue is for: ☒ Fairfax County Delegation to the General Assembly ☐ Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Date Approved by Federation: 23 October 2025
Issue: No governmental entity has yet grappled with the failures of our institutions to collaboratively create evidence-based policy during the COVID-19 pandemic to minimize harms to our school-age population. Extended closures of public schools during the pandemic had wide-ranging negative effects on our school children which are well-understood, including significant learning loss, social deficits, and a rise in chronic absenteeism which continues to persist. Whatever inequities existed among various demographic groups of children before the pandemic were exacerbated by school closures.
Background: During 2020 and 2021, journalists and health officials repeatedly made fundamental errors in their assessment and presentation of the evidence regarding virus transmission, and failed to consult robust pre-COVID recommendations about the effectiveness, timing, and longitudinal value of various public health interventions. While short-term school closures provide a recognized and recommended short-term response to viral pandemics, long-term closures were never recommended by public health officials before the COVID-19 pandemic. American governments ignored real-world evidence about the lack of public health benefit to school closures, even after a European Union meeting on May 17 th , 2020 concluded that there was no evidence of a significant increase in COVID infections in any of the 22 European countries that had returned their students to school.
Existing Conditions/Impacts: Americans have often relied on independent and/or bipartisan commissions to study how our government reacted in moments of crisis, in hopes of understanding the strengths and weaknesses of our process(es) and improving outcomes. Instead, most of the nearly 1.3 million public school children in Virginia did not set foot in a classroom for more than a year—many for nearly a year and a half. The Commonwealth can study the varying effects of different policy choices in different school divisions, but also more broadly study the root causes of how and why school divisions acted as they did during this time of crisis and uncertainty.
Preferred Position: We support the establishment of a JLARC study and/or commission to examine the institutional causes of extended school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to make recommendations as to how policy choices might be improved during similar crises in the future.
Benefits: Studying the failures of our past provides a road map so that we improve our operations in the future. We believe our various institutions were ill-equipped to act sensibly under duress, and that enough time has passed that we can and should address these failures with institutional recommendations.
Potential Supporters (Community leaders, Public/Private Partnership Opportunities, Organizations): School Boards, local health departments, and local governments throughout the Commonwealth



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Issue ID: 26E04 - Studying the Use of Technology in Schools
This Issue is for: <u> X </u> Fairfax County Delegation to the General Assembly <u> </u> Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Date Approved by Federation: 23 October 2025
Issue: Establishing benchmarks and best practices for the use of technology in schools, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), at various grades and instructional levels.
Background: Since FCPS has equipped all students with laptops, it is imperative to determine which standards govern their optimal use in the classroom, and to set clear programmatic goals. Even as one-to-one computing became necessary during the pandemic, it remains true that many parents (including a significant number employed by tech firms in Silicon Valley) seek out low-tech schools for their children, particularly for younger students. Scarce rigorous studies establish whether or how the use of technology in schools improves learning outcomes. In addition, the disruptive possibilities of AI in education offer both opportunities and risks to learning which require a strategic approach. (ref 25E04, 23E04, 22E04)
Existing Conditions/Impacts: Virginia's Digital Learning Integration Standards do not specify the components of technological literacy, even as they advise that technological skills are essential for all students. Though pandemic-related funding helped defray the significant hardware costs of expanding one-to-one computing to all students, these costs must now be borne as part of the ordinary budgeting process. Meanwhile, as AI has become omnipresent very few school systems have developed a clear vision to direct the use of AI by both staff and students.
Preferred Position: We urge the House of Delegates and Senate to commission a study that documents the educational community's best thinking regarding both the benefits and risks of the use of computers and AI in classrooms. This study should not only share best practices (either across the Commonwealth or nation-wide) but also should describe the elements of digital literacy expected of students at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.
Benefits: Obtaining a study written by subject area experts will help responsibly guide school divisions throughout the Commonwealth as we integrate computing and AI into the 21 st century classroom. Without such guidance, it is more difficult to defend a relatively expensive tool and ensure public support for keeping hardware and software up to date. Meanwhile AI will continue to insinuate itself into our schools in a haphazard and therefore disruptive manner.
Potential Supporters (Community leaders, Public/Private Partnership Opportunities, Organizations): Northern Virginia Technology Council, Virginia Association of School Superintendents