

Section 1. Public schools of high quality to be maintained.

The General Assembly shall provide for a system of free public elementary and secondary schools for all children of school age throughout the Commonwealth, and shall seek to ensure that an educational program of high quality is established and continually maintained.

Section 2. Standards of quality; State and local support of public schools.

Standards of quality for the several school divisions shall be determined and prescribed from time to time by the Board of Education, subject to revision only by the General Assembly. The General Assembly shall determine the manner in which funds are to be provided for the cost of maintaining an educational program meeting the prescribed standards of quality, and shall provide for the apportionment of the cost of such program between the Commonwealth and the local units of government comprising such school divisions. Each unit of local government shall provide its portion of such cost by local taxes or from other available funds.

Section 3. Compulsory education; free textbooks.

The General Assembly shall provide for the compulsory elementary and secondary education of every eligible child of appropriate age, such eligibility and age to be determined by law. It shall ensure that textbooks are provided at no cost to each child attending public school whose parent or guardian is financially unable to furnish them.

Section 4. Board of Education.

The general supervision of the public school system shall be vested in a Board of Education of nine members, to be appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly. Each appointment shall be for four years, except that those to fill vacancies shall be for the unexpired terms. Terms shall be staggered, so that no more than three regular appointments shall be made in the same year.

Section 5. Powers and duties of the Board of Education.

The powers and duties of the Board of Education shall be as follows:

- (a) Subject to such criteria and conditions as the General Assembly may prescribe, the Board shall divide the Commonwealth into school divisions of such geographical area and school-age population as will promote the realization of the prescribed standards of quality, and shall periodically review the adequacy of existing school divisions for this purpose.
- (b) It shall make annual reports to the Governor and the General Assembly concerning the condition and needs of public education in the Commonwealth, and shall in such report identify any school divisions which have failed to establish and maintain schools meeting the prescribed standards of quality.
- (c) It shall certify to the school board of each division a list of qualified persons for the office of division superintendent of schools, one of whom shall be selected to fill the post

by the division school board. In the event a division school board fails to select a division superintendent within the time prescribed by law, the Board of Education shall appoint him.

(d) It shall have authority to approve textbooks and instructional aids and materials for use in courses in the public schools of the Commonwealth.

(e) Subject to the ultimate authority of the General Assembly, the Board shall have primary responsibility and authority for effectuating the educational policy set forth in this article, and it shall have such other powers and duties as may be prescribed by law.

Section 6. Superintendent of Public Instruction.

A Superintendent of Public Instruction, who shall be an experienced educator, shall be appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly, for a term coincident with that of the Governor making the appointment, but the General Assembly may alter by statute this method of selection and term of office. The powers and duties of the Superintendent shall be prescribed by law.

Section 7. School boards.

The supervision of schools in each school division shall be vested in a school board, to be composed of members selected in the manner, for the term, possessing the qualifications, and to the number provided by law.

Section 8. The Literary Fund.

The General Assembly shall set apart as a permanent and perpetual school fund the present Literary Fund; the proceeds of all public lands donated by Congress for free public school purposes, of all escheated property, of all waste and unappropriated lands, of all property accruing to the Commonwealth by forfeiture except as hereinafter provided, of all fines collected for offenses committed against the Commonwealth, and of the annual interest on the Literary Fund; and such other sums as the General Assembly may appropriate. But so long as the principal of the Fund totals as much as eighty million dollars, the General Assembly may set aside all or any part of additional moneys received into its principal for public school purposes, including the teachers retirement fund.

The General Assembly may provide by general law an exemption from this section for the proceeds from the sale of all property seized and forfeited to the Commonwealth for a violation of the criminal laws of this Commonwealth proscribing the manufacture, sale or distribution of a controlled substance or marijuana. Such proceeds shall be paid into the state treasury and shall be distributed by law for the purpose of promoting law enforcement.

The Literary Fund shall be held and administered by the Board of Education in such manner as may be provided by law. The General Assembly may authorize the Board to borrow other funds against assets of the Literary Fund as collateral, such borrowing not to involve the full faith and credit of the Commonwealth.

The principal of the Fund shall include assets of the Fund in other funds or authorities which are

repayable to the Fund.

The amendment ratified November 6, 1990 and effective January 1, 1991—In paragraph one, after "forfeiture", added "except as hereinafter provided". Added a new paragraph after paragraph one.

Section 9. Other educational institutions.

The General Assembly may provide for the establishment, maintenance, and operation of any educational institutions which are desirable for the intellectual, cultural, and occupational development of the people of this Commonwealth. The governance of such institutions, and the status and powers of their boards of visitors or other governing bodies, shall be as provided by law.

Section 10. State appropriations prohibited to schools or institutions of learning not owned or exclusively controlled by the State or some subdivision thereof; exceptions to rule.

No appropriation of public funds shall be made to any school or institution of learning not owned or exclusively controlled by the State or some political subdivision thereof; provided, first, that the General Assembly may, and the governing bodies of the several counties, cities and towns may, subject to such limitations as may be imposed by the General Assembly, appropriate funds for educational purposes which may be expended in furtherance of elementary, secondary, collegiate or graduate education of Virginia students in public and nonsectarian private schools and institutions of learning, in addition to those owned or exclusively controlled by the State or any such county, city or town; second, that the General Assembly may appropriate funds to an agency, or to a school or institution of learning owned or controlled by an agency, created and established by two or more States under a joint agreement to which this State is a party for the purpose of providing educational facilities for the citizens of the several States joining in such agreement; third, that counties, cities, towns, and districts may make appropriations to nonsectarian schools of manual, industrial, or technical training, and also to any school or institution of learning owned or exclusively controlled by such county, city, town, or school district.

Section 11. Aid to nonpublic higher education.

The General Assembly may provide for loans to, and grants to or on behalf of, students attending nonprofit institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth whose primary purpose is to provide collegiate or graduate education and not to provide religious training or theological education. The General Assembly may also provide for a State agency or authority to assist in borrowing money for construction of educational facilities at such institutions, provided that the Commonwealth shall not be liable for any debt created by such borrowing. The General Assembly may also provide for the Commonwealth or any political subdivision thereof to contract with such institutions for the provision of educational or other related services.

The amendment ratified November 5, 1974 and effective January 1, 1975—Provided for "grants to or on behalf of" in addition to loans to students, in the first sentence. Added the last sentence to permit "the Commonwealth or any political subdivision thereof to contract with" nonprofit institutions of higher education.