

Dear Editor:

Here are the days that newspapers report agendas or half-truths. This is what is happening with the Medicaid story.

I am 100% in favor of supporting and increasing funding for Medicaid. Everyone in our great country – rich or poor - should be able to receive medical care. If schools are able to receive reimbursement for services provided to students with disabilities...fantastic: but, do not use our children as the justification for Medicaid funding. That is the half-truth media is spreading...without Medicaid, these kids won't get services. Heck, that school bus won't be able to pickup that deaf/blind student at his front door if Medicaid is no longer reimbursing for transportation. Yet somehow, school districts that don't seek reimbursement are able to provide that service.

The important feature of this program is the word – reimburse. School districts are being **reimbursed** for services provided because of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for a student with special needs. Whether Medicaid exists or not, school districts are to provide support services if the IEP mandates it. In Virginia, the following can be used to seek Medicaid funds.

Services that must be included in the <a href="#">Individualized Education Program (IEP)</a>	Services and administrative duties for general education and special education students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Physical Therapy</li><li>Occupational Therapy</li><li>Speech-Language Pathology</li><li>Nursing Services</li><li>Psychological services provided by a psychologist or school social worker</li><li>Personal Care Assistant Services (special ed aides, nursing aides)</li><li>Audiology Services</li><li>Medical Evaluations Services</li><li>Transportation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT)</li><li>Administrative Claiming</li></ul>

Virginia Department of Education

So why not use our children to keep these dollars flowing...because the funds generated from the reimbursement are NOT required to be used for these children. They are for the general fund. As you, the Daily Press reported years ago, Hampton used the funds for buses. Is that because otherwise our special needs children would never make it to school? If you...I...or the Daily Press sought information on the 2012 purchase of these buses, how surprise would you be to discover that the purchase was not for buses used to transport handicapped children? One newspaper reported how Medicaid funds could be used for new bleachers. Bleachers! Why not purchase addition classroom material for teaching students with disabilities or offer sign-on bonuses for non-provisional special education teachers. Recruited Math teachers can earn bonuses so what about teachers for these students whose classrooms see a huge turnover? Well, why not?

Hampton School Board has the authority to pass a policy to require Medicaid funds be used for the students whose disability earned Hampton City Schools those extra dollars. Hampton School Board in 2013 – at the behest of the Virginia School Boards Association – created a policy (BF-School Policy Manual a policy that says the school board has policies). The policy discussion, at the time, generated a chuckle from the school board attorney who explained the policy to the board...probably because this board-approved policy was and is ridiculous. Could the school board create a policy that is truly beneficial and important that could help boast the students that consistently suffer the greatest difficulties in the classrooms and our community? They could...but it is highly unlikely that they will. Thus making this fake news...it's not truly about the kids.

Do the Right Thing – Part 2 – Posted May 31, 2017

<https://nebula.wsimg.com/b0d8433f88f35507027750c5409f2a84?AccessKeyId=F2E1E31F591DDE27ADAF&disposition=0&alloworigin=1>