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HOUSE BILL NO. 254

Offered January 12, 2000

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 8.01-47 and 22.1-280.1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to reports of certain acts to law enforcement and school authorities.

Patron—Hamilton

Referred to Committee on Education

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That §§ 8.01-47 and 22.1-280.1 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 8.01-47. Immunity of school personnel investigating or reporting certain incidents.

In addition to any other immunity he may have, any teacher, instructor, principal, school administrator, school coordinator, guidance counselor or any other professional, administrative or clerical staff member or other personnel of any elementary or secondary school, or institution of higher learning who, in good faith with reasonable cause and without malice, acts to report, investigate or cause any investigation to be made into the activities of any student or students or any other person or persons as they relate to *conduct involving firebombs, explosive materials or other similar devices set forth in subdivision (v) of § 22.1-280.1 A*, or alcohol or drug use or abuse in or related to the school or institution or in connection with any school or institution activity, shall be immune from all civil liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed as the result of the making of such a report, investigation or disclosure.

§ 22.1-280.1. Reports of certain acts to school authorities.

A. Reports shall be made to the principal or his designee on all incidents involving (i) the assault, assault and battery, sexual assault, death, shooting, stabbing, cutting, or wounding of any person on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity; (ii) any conduct involving alcohol, marijuana, a controlled substance, imitation controlled substance, or an anabolic steroid on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity; (iii) any threats against school personnel while on a school bus, on school property or at a school-sponsored activity; ~~or~~ (iv) the illegal carrying of a firearm onto school property; *or (v) any illegal conduct involving firebombs, explosive materials or devices, or hoax explosive devices, as defined in § 18.2-85, or explosive or incendiary devices, as defined in § 18.2-433.1, or chemical bombs, as described in § 18.2-87.1, on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity.*

B. Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 12 (§ 16.1-299 et seq.) of Chapter 11 of Title 16.1, local law-enforcement authorities may report, and the principal or his designee may receive such reports, on offenses, wherever committed, by students enrolled at the school if the offense would be a felony if committed by an adult or would be an adult misdemeanor involving any incidents described in clauses (i) through ~~(iv)~~ of subsection A.

C. The principal or his designee shall submit a report of all incidents required or authorized to be reported pursuant to this section to the superintendent of the school division. The division superintendent shall annually report all such incidents to the Department of Education for the purpose of recording the frequency of such incidents on forms which shall be provided by the Department and shall make such information available to the public. A division superintendent who knowingly fails to comply or secure compliance with the reporting requirements of this subsection shall be subject to the sanctions authorized in § 22.1-65. A principal who knowingly fails to comply or secure compliance with the reporting requirements of this section shall be subject to sanctions prescribed by the local school board, which may include but need not be limited to demotion or dismissal.

The principal or his designee shall also notify the parent of any student involved in an incident required by subsection A or authorized by subsection B to be reported, regardless of whether disciplinary action is taken against such student or the nature of the disciplinary action. Such notice shall relate to only the relevant student's involvement and shall not include information concerning other students.

Whenever any student commits any reportable incident as set forth in this section, such student shall be required to participate in such prevention and intervention activities as deemed appropriate by the superintendent or his designee. Prevention and intervention activities shall be identified in the local school division's drug and violence prevention plans developed pursuant to the federal Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Title IV - "Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act").

D. The principal shall report to the local law-enforcement agency any act enumerated in subsection A which may constitute a criminal offense.

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60 E. All school boards shall develop, in cooperation with the local law-enforcement agencies, juvenile
61 and domestic relations court judges and personnel, parents, and the community at large, programs to
62 prevent violence and crime on school property and at school-sponsored events. Activities designed to
63 prevent the recurrence of violence and crime may include such interventions as school crime lines, peer
64 mediation, conflict resolution, community service requirements, and any program focused on
65 demonstrating the consequences of violence and crime.

66 F. A statement providing a procedure and the purpose for the requirements of this section shall be
67 included in the policy manual of all school divisions.

68 The Board of Education shall promulgate regulations to implement this section, including, but not
69 limited to, establishing reporting dates and report formats.

70 G. School boards are encouraged to develop and use a network of volunteer services in implementing
71 the prevention activities required by subsection E.

72 H. For the purposes of this section, "parent" or "parents" means any parent, guardian or other person
73 having control or charge of a child.

74 I. This section shall not be construed to diminish the authority of the Board of Education or the
75 Governor concerning decisions on whether, or the extent to which, Virginia shall participate in the
76 federal Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, or to diminish the Governor's authority to coordinate
77 and provide policy direction on official communications between the Commonwealth and the United
78 States government.