

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2003 SESSION

CHAPTER 688

An Act to amend and reenact §§ 22.1-253.13:4 and 22.1-254.2 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the creation of the general achievement diploma.

[H 1464]

Approved March 19, 2003

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 22.1-253.13:4 and 22.1-254.2 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 22.1-253.13:4. Standard 4. Diplomas and certificates; class rankings.

A. Each local school board shall award diplomas to all secondary school students, including students who transfer from nonpublic schools or from home instruction, who earn the units of credit prescribed by the Board of Education, pass the prescribed tests, and meet such other requirements as may be prescribed by the local school board and approved by the Board of Education. Provisions shall be made for students who transfer between secondary schools and from nonpublic schools or from home instruction as outlined in the standards for accreditation. Further, reasonable accommodation to meet the requirements for diplomas shall be provided for otherwise qualified students with disabilities as needed.

In addition, each local school board may devise, vis-a-vis the award of diplomas to secondary school students, a mechanism for calculating class rankings that takes into consideration whether the student has taken a required class more than one time and has had any prior earned grade for such required class expunged.

B. Students identified as disabled who complete the requirements of their individualized education programs shall be awarded special diplomas by local school boards.

C. Students who have completed a prescribed course of study as defined by the local school board shall be awarded certificates by local school boards if they do not qualify for diplomas.

D. The Board of Education shall develop criteria for recognizing exemplary performance in career and technical education programs by students who have completed the requirements for a standard or advanced studies diploma and shall award seals on the diplomas of students meeting such criteria.

E. By September 1, 2003, the Board shall establish, by regulation, requirements for the award of a general achievement diploma for those persons who have (i) achieved a passing score on the GED examination; (ii) successfully completed an education and training program designated by the Board of Education; and (iii) satisfied other requirements as may be established by the Board for the award of such diploma.

§ 22.1-254.2. Testing for general educational development; eligibility; guidelines.

A. The Board of Education shall establish a program of testing for general educational development (GED) through which persons may earn a high school equivalency certificate *or a diploma as provided in subsection E of § 22.1-253.13:4*. The following persons may participate in the testing program:

1. Persons who are at least ~~eighteen~~ 18 years of age and not enrolled in public school or not otherwise meeting the school attendance requirements set forth in § 22.1-254;

2. Persons ~~sixteen~~ 16 years of age or older who have been instructed by their parents in their home pursuant to § 22.1-254.1 and who have completed such home school instruction;

3. Persons who have been excused from school attendance pursuant to subsections B and C of § 22.1-254; and

4. Persons for whom an individual student alternative education plan has been granted pursuant to subsection D of § 22.1-254.

Under no circumstances shall persons under the age of ~~sixteen~~ 16 be eligible for the testing program.

B. From such funds as may be appropriated for this purpose, local school boards shall implement programs of preparation and testing for general educational development consistent with guidelines to be developed by the Board of Education. Such guidelines shall include a provision that allows preparatory and testing programs to be offered jointly by two or more school boards.

2. That the Board of Education shall promulgate regulations to implement the provisions of this act to be effective within 280 days of its enactment.