

1 VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

2 *An Act to amend and reenact § 22.1-208.01 of the Code of Virginia, relating to character education in*
3 *the public schools.*

4 [H 1498]

5 Approved

6 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**7 **1. That § 22.1-208.01 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

8 § 22.1-208.01. Character education required.

9 A. Each school board shall establish, within its existing programs, a character education program in
10 its schools. The purpose of the character education program shall be to instill in students civic virtues
11 and personal character traits so as to improve the learning environment, promote student achievement,
12 reduce disciplinary problems, and develop civic-minded students of high character. The components of
13 each program shall be developed in cooperation with the students, their parents, and the community at
14 large. The basic character traits taught may include (i) trustworthiness, including honesty, integrity,
15 reliability, and loyalty; (ii) respect, including the precepts of the Golden Rule, tolerance, and courtesy;
16 (iii) responsibility, including hard work, economic self-reliance, accountability, diligence, perseverance,
17 and self-control; (iv) fairness, including justice, consequences of bad behavior, principles of
18 nondiscrimination, and freedom from prejudice; (v) caring, including kindness, empathy, compassion,
19 consideration, generosity, and charity; and (vi) citizenship, including patriotism, the Pledge of
20 Allegiance, respect for the American flag, concern for the common good, respect for authority and the
21 law, and community-mindedness.

22 Classroom instruction may be used to supplement a character education program; however, each
23 program shall be interwoven into the school procedures and environment and structured to instruct
24 primarily through example, illustration, and participation, in such a way as to complement the Standards
25 of Learning.

26 This provision is intended to educate students regarding those core civic values and virtues which are
27 efficacious to civilized society and are common to the diverse social, cultural, and religious groups of
28 the Commonwealth. *Consistent with this purpose, Virginia's civic values, which are the principles*
29 *articulated in the Bill of Rights (Article I) of the Constitution of Virginia and the ideals reflected in the*
30 *seal of the Commonwealth, as described in § 7.1-26, may be taught as representative of such civic*
31 *values.* Nothing herein shall be construed as requiring or authorizing the indoctrination in any particular
32 religious or political belief.

33 B. The Board of Education shall establish criteria for character education programs, consistent with
34 the provisions of this section. To assist school divisions in implementing character education programs
35 and practices that are designed to promote the development of personal qualities as set forth in this
36 section and the Standards of Quality and that will improve family and community involvement in the
37 public schools, the Board of Education shall also establish, within the Department of Education, the
38 Commonwealth Character Initiative. The Board shall provide resources and technical assistance to school
39 divisions regarding successful character education programs and shall (i) identify and analyze effective
40 character education programs and practices and (ii) collect and disseminate among school divisions
41 information regarding such programs and practices and potential funding and support sources. The Board
42 may also provide resources supporting professional development for administrators and teachers in the
43 delivery of any character education programs.

44 C. The Board of Education shall award, with such funds as are appropriated for this purpose, grants
45 to school boards for the implementation of innovative character education programs.

46 **2. That school boards, at their discretion, may accept contributions in cash or in-kind from any**
47 **person, as defined in § 1-13.19, to defray the costs of implementing this provision.**

ENROLLED

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