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HOUSE BILL NO. 1615

Offered January 12, 2005

Prefiled December 15, 2004

A *BILL to amend and reenact §§ 9.1-184 and 22.1-279.8 of the Code of Virginia, relating to school safety audits.*

Patrons—Fralin and Bell

Referred to Committee on Education

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That §§ 9.1-184 and 22.1-279.8 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 9.1-184. Virginia Center for School Safety created; duties.

A. From such funds as may be appropriated, the Virginia Center for School Safety (the "Center") is hereby established within the Department. The Center shall:

1. Provide training for Virginia public school personnel in school safety and the effective identification of students who may be at risk for violent behavior and in need of special services or assistance;

2. Serve as a resource and referral center for Virginia school divisions by conducting research, sponsoring workshops, and providing information regarding current school safety concerns, such as conflict management and peer mediation, school facility design and technology, current state and federal statutory and regulatory school safety requirements, and legal and constitutional issues regarding school safety and individual rights;

3. Maintain and disseminate information to local school divisions on effective school safety initiatives in Virginia and across the nation;

4. Collect, analyze, and disseminate various Virginia school safety data, including school safety audit information submitted to it pursuant to § 22.1-279.8, collected by the Department;

5. Encourage the development of partnerships between the public and private sectors to promote school safety in Virginia;

6. Provide technical assistance to Virginia school divisions in the development and implementation of initiatives promoting school safety;

7. Develop a memorandum of understanding between the ~~Commissioner~~ *Director* of the Department of Criminal Justice Services and the Superintendent of Public Instruction to ensure collaboration and coordination of roles and responsibilities in areas of mutual concern, such as school safety audits and crime prevention; ~~and~~

8. Provide training for and certification of school security officers, as defined in § 9.1-101 and consistent with § 9.1-110; *and*

9. *Develop a list of items to be reviewed and evaluated in the school safety audits required by § 22.1-279.8, a standardized report format for school safety audits, any additional reporting criteria, and procedures for report submission, which may include instructions for electronic submission.*

B. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall cooperate with the Center and, upon request, assist the Center in the performance of its duties and responsibilities.

§ 22.1-279.8. School safety audits and school crisis and emergency management plans required.

A. For the purposes of this section, unless the context requires otherwise:

"School crisis and emergency management plan" means the essential procedures, operations, and assignments required to prevent, manage, and respond to a critical event or emergency, including natural disasters involving fire, flood, tornadoes, or other severe weather; loss or disruption of power, water, communications or shelter; bus or other accidents; medical emergencies; student or staff member deaths; explosions; bomb threats; gun, knife or other weapons threats; spills or exposures to hazardous substances; the presence of unauthorized persons or trespassers; the loss, disappearance or kidnapping of a student; hostage situations; violence on school property or at school activities; incidents involving acts of terrorism; and other incidents posing a serious threat of harm to students, personnel, or facilities.

"School safety audit" means a written assessment of the safety conditions in each public school to (i) identify and, if necessary, develop solutions for physical safety concerns, including building security issues and (ii) identify and evaluate any patterns of student safety concerns occurring on school property or at school-sponsored events. Solutions and responses shall include recommendations for structural adjustments, changes in school safety procedures, and revisions to the school board's standards for student conduct.

B. The ~~Superintendent of Public Instruction~~ *Virginia Center for School Safety* shall develop a list of

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59 items to be reviewed and evaluated in the school safety audits required by this section. *Such items shall*
60 *include those incidents reported to school authorities pursuant to § 22.1-279.3:1.*

61 *The Virginia Center for School Safety shall prescribe a standardized report format for school safety*
62 *audits, additional reporting criteria, and procedures for report submission, which may include*
63 *instructions for electronic submission.*

64 Each local school board shall require all schools under its supervisory control to annually conduct
65 school safety audits as defined in this section and consistent with such list. *The Virginia Center for*
66 *School Safety shall provide technical assistance and training for school divisions in the development and*
67 *submission of school safety audits.*

68 The results of such school safety audits shall be made public within 90 days of completion. The
69 local school board shall retain authority to withhold or limit the release of any security plans and
70 specific vulnerability assessment components as provided in subdivision 7 of § 2.2-3705.2. Each school
71 shall maintain a copy of the school safety audit, which may exclude such security plans and
72 vulnerability assessment components, within the office of the school principal and shall make a copy of
73 such report available for review upon written request.

74 Each school shall submit a copy of its school safety audit to the relevant school division
75 superintendent. The division superintendent shall collate and submit all such school safety audits, *in the*
76 *prescribed format and manner of submission*, to the Virginia Center for School Safety.

77 *The Virginia Center for School Safety shall collect and analyze all school safety audits and shall*
78 *prepare for each school division an annual written assessment of such school safety audits. Based on*
79 *such assessments, the Center shall report annually to the Secretaries of Education and Public Safety*
80 *identified patterns and trends in school safety concerns and any recommendations for action.*

81 C. The school board may establish a school safety audit committee to consist of representatives of
82 parents, teachers, local law-enforcement agencies, judicial and public safety personnel, and the
83 community at large. The school safety audit committee shall evaluate, in accordance with the directions
84 of the local school board, the safety of each school and submit a plan for improving school safety at a
85 public meeting of the local school board.

86 D. Each school board shall ensure that every school that it supervises shall develop a written school
87 crisis and emergency management plan, consistent with the definition provided in this section. The
88 Department of Education and the Virginia Center for School Safety shall provide technical assistance to
89 the school divisions of the Commonwealth in the development of the school crisis and emergency
90 management plans.

91 Upon consultation with local school boards, division superintendents, the Virginia Center for School
92 Safety, and the Coordinator of Emergency Management, the Board of Education shall develop, and may
93 revise as it deems necessary, a model school crisis and emergency management plan for the purpose of
94 assisting the public schools in Virginia in developing viable, effective crisis and emergency management
95 plans. Such model shall set forth recommended effective procedures and means by which parents can
96 contact the relevant school or school division regarding the location and safety of their school children
97 and by which school officials may contact parents, with parental approval, during a critical event or
98 emergency.