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SENATE BILL NO. 326

Offered January 9, 2008

Prefiled January 8, 2008

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 22.1-227.1 and 22.1-253.13:4 of the Code of Virginia, relating to industry certifications and licensure in career and technical education.

 Patron—Wagner

Referred to Committee on Education and Health

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 22.1-227.1 and 22.1-253.13:4 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 22.1-227.1. Career and technical education.

The Board of Education shall incorporate into career and technical education the Standards of Learning for mathematics, science, English, and social studies, including history, and other subject areas as may be appropriate. The Board may also authorize, in its regulations for accrediting public schools in Virginia, the substitution of industry certification and state licensure examinations for Standards of Learning assessments for the purpose of awarding verified units of credit for career and technical education courses, where appropriate.

The Board shall also develop a plan for increasing the number of students receiving industry certification and state licensure as part of their career and technical education. The plan shall include an annual goal for school divisions, which may be based on the adequate yearly progress calculation used to measure academic improvement.

With such funds as may be appropriated for such purpose, there shall be established, within the Department of Education, a unit of specialists in career and technical education. The unit shall (i) assist in developing and revising local career and technical curriculum to integrate the Standards of Learning, (ii) provide professional development for career and technical instructional personnel to improve the quality of career and technical education, (iii) conduct site visits to the schools providing career and technical education, and (iv) seek the input of business and industry representatives regarding the content and direction of career and technical education programs in the public schools of the Commonwealth.

§ 22.1-253.13:4. Standard 4. Student achievement and graduation requirements.

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 to facilitate the transfer and appropriate grade placement of students from other public secondary schools, 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.

Each local school board shall notify the parents of rising eleventh and twelfth grade students of (i) the number and subject area requirements of standard and verified units of credit required for graduation pursuant to the standards for accreditation and (ii) the remaining number and subject area requirements of such units of credit the individual student requires for graduation.

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

Each local school board shall notify the parent of such students with disabilities who have an individualized education program and who fail to meet the requirements for a standard or advanced studies diploma of the student's right to a free and appropriate education to age 21, inclusive, pursuant to Article 2 (§ 22.1-213 et seq.) of Chapter 13 of this title.

C. Students who have completed a prescribed course of study as defined by the local school board shall be awarded certificates of program completion by local school boards if they are not eligible to receive a standard, advanced studies, modified standard, special, or general achievement diploma.

Each local school board shall provide notification of the right to a free public education for students who have not reached 20 years of age on or before August 1 of the school year, pursuant to Chapter 1

59 (§ 22.1-1 et seq.) of this title, to the parent of students who fail to graduate or who have failed to
60 achieve the number of verified units of credit required for graduation as provided in the standards for
61 accreditation. If such student who does not graduate or achieve such verified units of credit is a student
62 for whom English is a second language, the local school board shall notify the parent of the student's
63 opportunity for a free public education in accordance with § 22.1-5.

64 D. In establishing course and credit requirements for a high school diploma, the Board shall:

65 1. Provide for the selection of integrated learning courses meeting the Standards of Learning and
66 approved by the Board to satisfy graduation credit requirements, which shall include Standards of
67 Learning testing, as necessary;

68 2. Establish the requirements for a standard, modified standard, or advanced studies high school
69 diploma, which shall include one credit in fine or performing arts or career and technical education and
70 one credit in United States and Virginia history. The requirements for a standard high school diploma
71 shall, however, include at least two sequential electives chosen from a concentration of courses selected
72 from a variety of options that may be planned to ensure the completion of a focused sequence of
73 elective courses. Students may take such focused sequence of elective courses in consecutive years or
74 any two years of high school. Such focused sequence of elective courses shall provide a foundation for
75 further education or training or preparation for employment and shall be developed by the school
76 division, consistent with Board of Education guidelines and as approved by the local school board;

77 3. Establish the requirements for a technical diploma. This diploma shall meet or exceed the
78 requirements of a standard diploma and will include a concentration in career and technical education, as
79 established in Board regulations. A student who meets the requirement for the advanced studies diploma
80 who also fulfills a concentration in career and technical education shall receive an advanced technical
81 diploma. The Board may develop or designate assessments in career and technical education for the
82 purposes of awarding verified credit pursuant to subdivision 6;

83 4. Provide, in the requirements for the verified units of credit stipulated for obtaining the standard or
84 advanced studies diploma, that students completing elective classes into which the Standards of Learning
85 for any required course have been integrated may take the relevant Standards of Learning test for the
86 relevant required course and receive, upon achieving a satisfactory score on the specific Standards of
87 Learning assessment, a verified unit of credit for such elective class that shall be deemed to satisfy the
88 Board's requirement for verified credit for the required course;

89 5. Establish a procedure to facilitate the acceleration of students that allows qualified students, with
90 the recommendation of the division superintendent, without completing the 140-hour class, to obtain
91 credit for such class upon demonstration of mastery of the course content and objectives. Having
92 received credit for the course, the student shall be permitted to sit for the relevant Standards of Learning
93 assessment and, upon receiving a passing score, shall earn a verified credit. Nothing in this section shall
94 preclude relevant school division personnel from enforcing compulsory attendance in public schools; and

95 6. Provide for the award of verified units of credit for passing scores on industry certifications, state
96 licensure examinations, and national occupational competency assessments approved by the Board of
97 Education.

98 School boards shall report annually to the Board of Education the number of industry certifications
99 obtained, state licensure examinations passed, and the number of career and technical education
100 completers that graduated. These numbers shall be reported as categories on the School Performance
101 Report Card.

102 *School boards shall also report annually to the Board of Education the number of students obtaining*
103 *industry credentials or state licensure as part of their career and technical education.*

104 For the purposes of this subdivision, a "career and technical education completer" is a student who
105 has met the requirements for a career and technical education or specialization and all requirements
106 for high school graduation or an approved alternative education program.

107 In addition, the Board may:

108 a. For the purpose of awarding verified units of credit, approve the use of additional or substitute
109 tests for the correlated Standards of Learning assessment, such as academic achievement tests, industry
110 certifications or state licensure examinations; and

111 b. Permit students completing career and technical education programs designed to enable such
112 students to pass such industry certification examinations or state licensure examinations to be awarded,
113 upon obtaining satisfactory scores on such industry certification or licensure examinations, the
114 appropriate verified units of credit for one or more career and technical education classes into which
115 relevant Standards of Learning for various classes taught at the same level have been integrated. Such
116 industry certification and state licensure examinations may cover relevant Standards of Learning for
117 various required classes and may, at the discretion of the Board, address some Standards of Learning for
118 several required classes.

119 E. In the exercise of its authority to recognize exemplary academic performance by providing for
120 diploma seals, the Board of Education shall develop criteria for recognizing exemplary performance in

121 career and technical education programs by students who have completed the requirements for a
122 standard or advanced studies diploma and shall award seals on the diplomas of students meeting such
123 criteria.

124 In addition, the Board shall establish criteria for awarding a diploma seal for advanced mathematics
125 and technology for the standard and advanced studies diplomas. The Board shall consider including
126 criteria for (i) technology courses; (ii) technical writing, reading, and oral communication skills; (iii)
127 technology-related training; and (iv) industry, professional, and trade association national certifications.

128 The Board shall also establish criteria for awarding a diploma seal for excellence in civics education
129 and understanding of our state and federal constitutions and the democratic model of government for the
130 standard and advanced studies diplomas. The Board shall consider including criteria for (i) successful
131 completion of history, government, and civics courses, including courses that incorporate character
132 education; (ii) voluntary participation in community service or extracurricular activities that includes the
133 types of activities that shall qualify as community service and the number of hours required; and (iii)
134 related requirements as it deems appropriate.

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

139 G. (Effective October 1, 2008) To ensure the uniform assessment of high school graduation rates, the
140 Board shall collect, analyze, and report high school graduation and dropout data using a formula
141 prescribed by the Board.

142 The Board may promulgate such regulations as may be necessary and appropriate for the collection,
143 analysis, and reporting of such data.