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HOUSE BILL NO. 656

Offered January 11, 2012

Prefiled January 11, 2012

A BILL to amend and reenact § 22.1-279.6 of the Code of Virginia, relating to parental notification of school investigations.

Patrons—Kory, BaCote, Englin, Herring, Hope, LeMunyon, Lopez, Morrissey, Scott, J.M., Surovell and Torian

Referred to Committee on Education

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 22.1-279.6 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 22.1-279.6. Board of Education guidelines and model policies for codes of student conduct; school board regulations.

A. The Board of Education shall establish guidelines and develop model policies for codes of student conduct to aid local school boards in the implementation of such policies. The guidelines and model policies shall include, but not be limited to, (i) criteria for the removal of a student from a class, the use of suspension, expulsion, and exclusion as disciplinary measures, the grounds for suspension and expulsion and exclusion, and the procedures to be followed in such cases, including proceedings for such suspension, expulsion, and exclusion decisions and all applicable appeals processes; (ii) standards, consistent with state, federal and case laws, for school board policies on alcohol and drugs, gang-related activity, hazing, vandalism, trespassing, threats, search and seizure, disciplining of students with disabilities, intentional injury of others, self-defense, bullying, the use of electronic means for purposes of bullying, harassment, and intimidation, and dissemination of such policies to students, their parents, and school personnel; and (iii) standards for in-service training of school personnel in and examples of the appropriate management of student conduct and student offenses in violation of school board policies.

In accordance with the most recent enunciation of constitutional principles by the Supreme Court of the United States of America, the Board's standards for school board policies on alcohol and drugs and search and seizure shall include guidance for procedures relating to voluntary and mandatory drug testing in schools, including, but not limited to, which groups may be tested, use of test results, confidentiality of test information, privacy considerations, consent to the testing, need to know, and release of the test results to the appropriate school authority.

The Board's standards shall also require the notification of a parent by a school administrator whenever school administrators begin an investigation into a potential violation of any school board policy. Such notification may be made by phone or email, or any other reasonable method, as determined by the school board. No school board employee shall be held liable for failure to reach a parent under such circumstances.

For the purposes of this section, "investigation" shall not include any questioning of a student during or in the immediate aftermath of a potential violation; however, any further questioning of a student by an administrator shall constitute an investigation.

In the case of suspension and expulsion, the procedures set forth in this article shall be the minimum procedures that the school board may prescribe.

B. School boards shall adopt and revise, as required by § 22.1-253.13:7 and in accordance with the requirements of this section, regulations on codes of student conduct that are consistent with, but may be more stringent than, the guidelines of the Board. School boards shall include, in the regulations on codes of student conduct, procedures for suspension, expulsion, and exclusion decisions and shall biennially review the model student conduct code to incorporate discipline options and alternatives to preserve a safe, nondisruptive environment for effective teaching and learning.

Each school board shall include, in its code of student conduct, prohibitions against bullying, hazing, and profane or obscene language or conduct. School boards shall also cite, in their codes of student conduct, the provisions of § 18.2-56, which defines and prohibits hazing and imposes a Class 1 misdemeanor penalty for violations, i.e., confinement in jail for not more than 12 months and a fine of not more than \$2,500, either or both.

A school board may regulate the use or possession of beepers or other portable communications devices and laser pointers by students on school property or attending school functions or activities and establish disciplinary procedures pursuant to this article to which students violating such regulations will be subject.

INTRODUCED

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58 Nothing herein shall be construed to require any school board to adopt policies requiring or
59 encouraging any drug testing in schools. However, a school board may, in its discretion, require or
60 encourage drug testing in accordance with the Board of Education's guidelines and model student
61 conduct policies required by subsection A and the Board's guidelines for student searches required by
62 § 22.1-279.7.

63 C. The Board of Education shall establish standards to ensure compliance with the federal Improving
64 America's Schools Act of 1994 (Part F-Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994), as amended, in accordance with
65 § 22.1-277.07.

66 This subsection shall not be construed to diminish the authority of the Board of Education or to
67 diminish the Governor's authority to coordinate and provide policy direction on official communications
68 between the Commonwealth and the United States government.