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**HOUSE BILL NO. 1344**

Offered January 9, 2013

Prefiled November 20, 2012

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 22.1-217.02, relating to special education; children identified as deaf or hard-of-hearing.*

Patrons—Bell, Richard P.

Referred to Committee on Education

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:****1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 22.1-217.02 as follows:****§ 22.1-217.02. Individualized education plans; children identified as deaf or hard-of-hearing.**

A. In developing an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for a child identified as deaf or hard-of-hearing, in addition to any other requirements established by the Board of Education, each local school division shall ensure that IEP teams consider the child's specific communication needs and address those needs as appropriate in the child's IEP. In considering the child's needs, the IEP team shall expressly consider the following:

1. The child's individual communication mode or language;
2. The availability to the child of a sufficient number of age, cognitive, academic, and language peers of similar abilities if the parents so desire;
3. The availability to the child of deaf or hard-of-hearing adult models of the child's communication mode or language;
4. The provision of direct and ongoing language access to teachers of the deaf and hard-of-hearing, interpreters, psychologists, educational audiologists, speech-language pathologists, administrators, and other special education personnel who are knowledgeable due to specific training and who are proficient in the child's primary communication mode or language;
5. The provision of communication-accessible academic instruction, school services, and direct access to all components of the educational process, including recess, lunch, extracurricular social and athletic activities, and the equal opportunity to participate in advanced coursework, technical vocational coursework, and academic classes as identified by the IEP team;
6. Equipping children identified as deaf or hard-of-hearing with appropriate assistive technology across a full spectrum; and
7. That the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind may be the least restrictive environment for the child.

B. No child identified as deaf or hard-of-hearing shall be denied the opportunity for instruction in a particular communication mode or language solely because another communication mode or language was originally chosen for the child.

C. A child may receive instruction in more than one communication mode or language.

D. For the purposes of this section, "communication mode or language mode" means one or more of the following systems or methods of communication applicable to children identified as deaf or hard-of-hearing: (i) American Sign Language; (ii) English-based manual or sign systems; (iii) oral, aural, speech-based training; (iv) spoken and written English, including speech reading, lip reading, or cued speech; and (v) communication with assistive technology devices to facilitate language and learning.

INTRODUCED

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