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HOUSE BILL NO. 640

Offered January 8, 2014

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A *BILL to amend and reenact § 22.1-253.13:3 of the Code of Virginia, relating to Standards of Learning assessments.*

Patron—Campbell

Referred to Committee on Education

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 22.1-253.13:3 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:****§ 22.1-253.13:3. Standard 3. Accreditation, other standards, assessments, and releases from state regulations.**

A. The Board of Education shall promulgate regulations establishing standards for accreditation pursuant to the Administrative Process Act (§ 2.2-4000 et seq.), which shall include, but not be limited to, student outcome measures, requirements and guidelines for instructional programs and for the integration of educational technology into such instructional programs, administrative and instructional staffing levels and positions, including staff positions for supporting educational technology, student services, auxiliary education programs such as library and media services, course and credit requirements for graduation from high school, community relations, and the philosophy, goals, and objectives of public education in Virginia.

The Board of Education shall promulgate regulations establishing standards for accreditation of public virtual schools under the authority of the local school board that enroll students full time.

The Board shall review annually the accreditation status of all schools in the Commonwealth.

Each local school board shall maintain schools that are fully accredited pursuant to the standards for accreditation as prescribed by the Board of Education. Each local school board shall review the accreditation status of all schools in the local school division annually in public session. Within the time specified by the Board of Education, each school board shall submit corrective action plans for any schools within its school division that have been designated as not meeting the standards as approved by the Board.

When the Board of Education has obtained evidence through the school academic review process that the failure of schools within a division to achieve full accreditation status is related to division level failure to implement the Standards of Quality, the Board may require a division level academic review. After the conduct of such review and within the time specified by the Board of Education, each school board shall submit for approval by the Board a corrective action plan, consistent with criteria established by the Board and setting forth specific actions and a schedule designed to ensure that schools within its school division achieve full accreditation status. Such corrective action plans shall be part of the relevant school division's comprehensive plan pursuant to § 22.1-253.13:6.

With such funds as are appropriated or otherwise received for this purpose, the Board shall adopt and implement an academic review process, to be conducted by the Department of Education, to assist schools that are accredited with warning. The Department shall forward a report of each academic review to the relevant local school board, and such school board shall report the results of such academic review and the required annual progress reports in public session. The local school board shall implement any actions identified through the academic review and utilize them for improvement planning.

B. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall develop and the Board of Education shall approve criteria for determining and recognizing educational performance in the Commonwealth's public school divisions and schools. Such criteria, when approved, shall become an integral part of the accreditation process and shall include student outcome measurements. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall annually identify to the Board those school divisions and schools that exceed or do not meet the approved criteria. Such identification shall include an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of public education programs in the various school divisions in Virginia and recommendations to the General Assembly for further enhancing student learning uniformly across the Commonwealth. In recognizing educational performance in the school divisions, the Board shall include consideration of special school division accomplishments, such as numbers of dual enrollments and students in Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses, and participation in academic year Governor's Schools.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall assist local school boards in the implementation of action plans for increasing educational performance in those school divisions and schools that are

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59 identified as not meeting the approved criteria. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall monitor
60 the implementation of and report to the Board of Education on the effectiveness of the corrective actions
61 taken to improve the educational performance in such school divisions and schools.

62 C. With such funds as are available for this purpose, the Board of Education shall prescribe
63 assessment methods to determine the level of achievement of the Standards of Learning objectives by all
64 students. *The number and type of assessments shall meet but not exceed the minimal requirements*
65 *established by the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended.* Such
66 assessments shall evaluate knowledge, application of knowledge, critical thinking, and skills related to
67 the Standards of Learning being assessed. The Board shall (i) in consultation with the chairpersons of
68 the eight regional superintendents' study groups, establish a timetable for administering the Standards of
69 Learning assessments to ensure genuine end-of-course and end-of-grade testing and (ii) with the
70 assistance of independent testing experts, conduct a regular analysis and validation process for these
71 assessments.

72 In prescribing such Standards of Learning assessments, the Board shall provide local school boards
73 the option of administering tests for United States History to 1877, United States History: 1877 to the
74 Present, and Civics and Economics. The last administration of the cumulative grade eight history test
75 will be during the 2007-2008 academic school year. Beginning with the 2008-2009 academic year, all
76 school divisions shall administer the United States History to 1877, United States History: 1877 to the
77 Present, and Civics and Economics tests. The Board shall also provide the option of industry
78 certification and state licensure examinations as a student-selected verified credit.

79 The Board of Education shall make publicly available such assessments in a timely manner and as
80 soon as practicable following the administration of such tests, so long as the release of such assessments
81 does not compromise test security or deplete the bank of assessment questions necessary to construct
82 subsequent tests, or limit the ability to test students on demand and provide immediate results in the
83 web-based assessment system.

84 The Board shall include in the student outcome measures that are required by the Standards for
85 Accreditation end-of-course or end-of-grade tests for various grade levels and classes, as determined by
86 the Board, in accordance with the Standards of Learning. These Standards of Learning assessments shall
87 include, but need not be limited to, end-of-course or end-of-grade tests for English, mathematics,
88 science, and history and social science. Local school divisions shall provide targeted mathematics
89 remediation and intervention to students in grades six through eight who show computational
90 deficiencies as demonstrated by their individual performance on any diagnostic test or grade-level
91 Standards of Learning mathematics test that measures non-calculator computational skills.

92 In addition, to assess the educational progress of students, the Board of Education shall (a) develop
93 appropriate assessments, which may include criterion-referenced tests and alternative assessment
94 instruments that may be used by classroom teachers; (b) select appropriate industry certification and
95 state licensure examinations; and (c) prescribe and provide measures, which may include nationally
96 normed tests to be used to identify students who score in the bottom quartile at selected grade levels.
97 An annual justification that includes evidence that the student meets the participation criteria defined by
98 the Virginia Department of Education shall be provided for each student considered for the Virginia
99 Grade Level Alternative. Each Individual Education Program team shall review such justification and
100 make the final determination as to whether or not the Virginia Grade Level Alternative is appropriate for
101 the student. The superintendent and the school board chairman shall certify to the Board of Education,
102 as a part of certifying compliance with the Standards of Quality, that there is a justification in the
103 Individual Education Program for every student who takes the Virginia Grade Level Alternative.
104 Compliance with this requirement shall be monitored as a part of the special education monitoring
105 process conducted by the Department of Education. The Board shall report to the Governor and General
106 Assembly in its annual reports pursuant to § 22.1-18 any school division that is not in compliance with
107 this requirement.

108 The Standards of Learning requirements, including all related assessments, shall be waived for any
109 student awarded a scholarship under the Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Program, pursuant to
110 § 30-231.2, who is enrolled in a preparation program for the General Education Development (GED)
111 certificate or in an adult basic education program to obtain the high school diploma.

112 The Board of Education may adopt special provisions related to the administration and use of any
113 Standards of Learning test or tests in a content area as applied to accreditation ratings for any period
114 during which the Standards of Learning content or assessments in that area are being revised and phased
115 in. Prior to statewide administration of such tests, the Board of Education shall provide notice to local
116 school boards regarding such special provisions.

117 D. The Board of Education may pursue all available civil remedies pursuant to § 22.1-19.1 or
118 administrative action pursuant to § 22.1-292.1 for breaches in test security and unauthorized alteration
119 of test materials or test results.

120 The Board may initiate or cause to be initiated a review or investigation of any alleged breach in

121 security, unauthorized alteration, or improper administration of tests, including the exclusion of students
122 from testing who are required to be assessed, by local school board employees responsible for the
123 distribution or administration of the tests.

124 Records and other information furnished to or prepared by the Board during the conduct of a review
125 or investigation may be withheld pursuant to subdivision 11 of § 2.2-3705.3. However, this section shall
126 not prohibit the disclosure of records to (i) a local school board or division superintendent for the
127 purpose of permitting such board or superintendent to consider or to take personnel action with regard to
128 an employee or (ii) any requester, after the conclusion of a review or investigation, in a form that (a)
129 does not reveal the identity of any person making a complaint or supplying information to the Board on
130 a confidential basis and (b) does not compromise the security of any test mandated by the Board. Any
131 local school board or division superintendent receiving such records or other information shall, upon
132 taking personnel action against a relevant employee, place copies of such records or information relating
133 to the specific employee in such person's personnel file.

134 Notwithstanding any other provision of state law, no test or examination authorized by this section,
135 including the Standards of Learning assessments, shall be released or required to be released as
136 minimum competency tests, if, in the judgment of the Board, such release would breach the security of
137 such test or examination or deplete the bank of questions necessary to construct future secure tests.

138 E. With such funds as may be appropriated, the Board of Education may provide, through an
139 agreement with vendors having the technical capacity and expertise to provide computerized tests and
140 assessments, and test construction, analysis, and security, for (i) web-based computerized tests and
141 assessments for the evaluation of student progress during and after remediation and (ii) the development
142 of a remediation item bank directly related to the Standards of Learning.

143 F. To assess the educational progress of students as individuals and as groups, each local school
144 board shall require the use of Standards of Learning assessments and other relevant data, such as
145 industry certification and state licensure examinations, to evaluate student progress and to determine
146 educational performance. Each local school shall require the administration of appropriate assessments to
147 all students for grade levels and courses identified by the Board of Education, which may include
148 criterion-referenced tests, teacher-made tests and alternative assessment instruments and shall include the
149 Standards of Learning Assessments and the National Assessment of Educational Progress state-by-state
150 assessment. Each school board shall analyze and report annually, in compliance with any criteria that
151 may be established by the Board of Education, the results from the Stanford Achievement Test Series,
152 Ninth Edition (Stanford Nine) assessment, if administered, industry certification examinations, and the
153 Standards of Learning Assessments to the public.

154 The Board of Education shall not require administration of the Stanford Achievement Test Series,
155 Ninth Edition (Stanford Nine) assessment, except as may be selected to facilitate compliance with the
156 requirements for home instruction pursuant to § 22.1-254.1.

157 The Board shall include requirements for the reporting of the Standards of Learning assessment
158 scores and averages for each year as part of the Board's requirements relating to the School Performance
159 Report Card. Such scores shall be disaggregated for each school by student subgroups on the Virginia
160 assessment program as appropriate and shall be reported to the public within three months of their
161 receipt. These reports (i) shall be posted on the portion of the Department of Education's website
162 relating to the School Performance Report Card, in a format and in a manner that allows year-to-year
163 comparisons, and (ii) may include the National Assessment of Educational Progress state-by-state
164 assessment.

165 G. Each local school division superintendent shall regularly review the division's submission of data
166 and reports required by state and federal law and regulations to ensure that all information is accurate
167 and submitted in a timely fashion. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall provide a list of the
168 required reports and data to division superintendents annually. The status of compliance with this
169 requirement shall be included in the Board of Education's annual report to the Governor and the General
170 Assembly as required by § 22.1-18.

171 H. Any school board may request the Board of Education for release from state regulations or, on
172 behalf of one or more of its schools, for approval of an Individual School Accreditation Plan for the
173 evaluation of the performance of one or more of its schools as authorized for certain other schools by
174 the Standards of Accreditation pursuant to 8 VAC 20-131-280 C of the Virginia Administrative Code.
175 Waivers of regulatory requirements may be granted by the Board of Education based on submission of a
176 request from the division superintendent and chairman of the local school board. The Board of
177 Education may grant, for a period up to five years, a waiver of regulatory requirements that are not (i)
178 mandated by state or federal law or (ii) designed to promote health or safety. The school board shall
179 provide in its waiver request a description of how the releases from state regulations are designed to
180 increase the quality of instruction and improve the achievement of students in the affected school or
181 schools. The Department of Education shall provide (a) guidance to any local school division that

182 requests releases from state regulations and (b) information about opportunities to form partnerships with
183 other agencies or entities to any local school division in which the school or schools granted releases
184 from state regulations have demonstrated improvement in the quality of instruction and the achievement
185 of students.

186 The Board of Education may also grant local school boards waivers of specific requirements in
187 § 22.1-253.13:2, based on submission of a request from the division superintendent and chairman of the
188 local school board, permitting the local school board to assign instructional personnel to the schools with
189 the greatest needs, so long as the school division employs a sufficient number of personnel divisionwide
190 to meet the total number required by § 22.1-253.13:2 and all pupil/teacher ratios and class size
191 maximums set forth in subsection C of § 22.1-253.13:2 are met. The school board shall provide in its
192 request a description of how the waivers from specific Standards of Quality staffing standards are
193 designed to increase the quality of instruction and improve the achievement of students in the affected
194 school or schools. The waivers may be renewed in up to five-year increments, or revoked, based on
195 student achievement results in the affected school or schools.