

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 22.1-208.02, relating to Culturally Relevant and Inclusive Education Practices Advisory Committee; established.

[H 916]

Approved

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 22.1-208.02 as follows:

§ 22.1-208.02. Culturally Relevant and Inclusive Education Practices Advisory Committee.

A. The Department of Education, in consultation with the Commonwealth's Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, shall establish and appoint such members as deemed appropriate to the Culturally Relevant and Inclusive Education Practices Advisory Committee (the Advisory Committee) for the purpose of strengthening culturally relevant education practices and supporting anti-bias education and response in the Commonwealth. The Advisory Committee shall include but not be limited to a geographically, ethnically, and religiously diverse representation of teachers, curriculum specialists, principals, superintendents, advocates, higher education institutions, parents, legislators, and community-based organizations. The Advisory Committee shall report its recommendations to the Board of Education, the Governor, and the Chairpersons of the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education and Health no later than July 1, 2021. The Committee shall issue interim reports as it deems necessary.

B. The Advisory Committee shall provide standards recommendations to the Virginia Department of Education, and they shall be considered by the Board of Education, during the 2021 - 2022 review of the history and social science Standards of Learning. Such recommendations shall include:

1. The historical underpinnings of the Holocaust and other historical genocides in the context of how increased lower levels of hate, ridicule, and dehumanization led to larger acts of violence and state-sponsored discrimination and violence;

2. Slavery, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and other forms of historical dehumanizing injustice and discrimination;

3. The ignored and untold history of the indigenous people of Virginia and North America; and

4. The untold histories of other groups historically underrepresented in American and world history.

C. The Advisory Committee shall provide recommendations for the issuance of Board of Education guidelines for local school division staff, including teachers and school counselors, to offer age-appropriate anti-bias education to students. The recommendations for such guidelines shall include:

1. Recognition that anti-bias and anti-discrimination education is the work and responsibility of all staff within the local school division;

2. An emphasis on diversity and building a community of empathy, respect, understanding, and connection;

3. Examination of how lower levels of hate, ridicule, and dehumanization lead to larger acts of violence, discrimination and violence;

4. Acknowledgment of inequity on the individual level, such as biased speech and harassment, and injustice at the institutional or systemic level, such as discrimination, and the harmful impact of inequity and injustice on the community, historically and today;

5. School-based and classroom-based responses, which are student centered and proven effective, to various forms of racism, bigotry, and discrimination through empathy, respect, understanding, and connection; and

6. Updates to the Department of Education's teacher's manual, as required by action taken by the 2009 Session of the General Assembly, that emphasizes the causes and ramifications of the Holocaust and genocide.

D. The Advisory Committee shall provide recommendations on meaningful professional development with school personnel related to culturally relevant and inclusive education practices. In addition to the Board of Education, the Governor, and the Chairpersons of the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education and Health, these recommendations shall also be provided to the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure and the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia. This shall include but not be limited to considerations for:

1. The policies and regulations governing teacher preparation programs; and

2. The policies and regulations governing teacher licensure and professional development requirements for licensure renewal.

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