

2020 SPECIAL SESSION I

INTRODUCED

20200604D

HOUSE BILL NO. 5095

Offered August 19, 2020

A *BILL to require the Department of Health to develop criteria for assessing the long-term impact of distance learning on students and to collect and make available data and information to inform decisions regarding in-person education during the COVID-19 public health emergency; emergency.*

Patrons—Hodges, Avoli, Batten, Cole, M.L., Coyner, Edmunds, Fowler, Gilbert, Head, LaRock, Marshall, Runion, Walker and Wright; Senator: Ruff

Referred to Committee on Education

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

§ 1. *That the Department of Health shall, in cooperation with the Department of Education and representatives of the Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and other appropriate stakeholders, develop specific criteria for assessing the long-term impact of distance learning on students in the Commonwealth during the public health emergency related to the COVID-19 public health emergency, including the impact of distance learning on students' health, mental health, social and emotional development, and academic achievement. The Department of Health shall complete its work and make such criteria available on a website maintained by the Department of Health by November 30, 2020.*

§ 2. *The Department of Health, together with the Department of Education, shall collect and make available to the public on a website maintained by the Department of Health data and information for each of the criteria developed pursuant to § 1.*

§ 3. *Every school board in the Commonwealth shall consider the criteria for assessing the long-term impact of distance learning on students and the data and information collected and made available by the Department of Health pursuant to § 1 as part of any decision about when to open schools for in-person education during the COVID-19 public health emergency. No school board that complies with the provisions of this section shall be liable for any civil cause of action arising from any act or omission alleged to have resulted in the contraction of or exposure to COVID-19, absent gross negligence or willful misconduct.*

§ 4. *Any school board that decides, after consideration of the criteria for assessing the long-term impact of distance learning on students and the data and information collected and made available by the Department of Health pursuant to § 1, to offer full-time, in-person education for students shall also offer distance learning options for students who do not wish to attend school in person. Such distance learning options shall be available for the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency.*

2. That an emergency exists and this act is in force from its passage.

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