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## HOUSE BILL NO. 1575

Offered January 11, 2023

Prefiled January 6, 2023

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 22.1-206.3, relating to public elementary and secondary schools; development of the Safety While Accessing Technology education program; annual instruction required.*

Patron—Walker

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 22.1-206.3 as follows:****§ 22.1-206.3. *Safety While Accessing Technology education program; annual instruction required.***

A. *The Board shall, in collaboration with law-enforcement agencies, criminal justice agencies, and other nongovernmental organizations with experience in child online safety issues and human trafficking prevention, develop a Safety While Accessing Technology (SWAT) education program for elementary and secondary school students in the Commonwealth. The SWAT education program shall include instruction on the following topics:*

1. *Safe and responsible use of social networking websites, including Internet chat rooms, email, instant messaging, and other modes of electronic communication;*

2. *The risks of transmitting personal information on the Internet and the importance of privacy protection;*

3. *Copyright laws on written materials, photographs, music, and videos posted or shared online; ~~and~~*

4. *The importance of establishing open communication with responsible adults about any online communications or activities;*

5. *How to recognize, avoid, and report suspicious, potentially dangerous, or illegal online communications or activities, including (i) potential solicitation by sexual predators, (ii) unsolicited or deceptive communications, and (iii) harassment and cyberbullying; and*

6. *Resources and assistance programs available for any child or parent who may have encountered online solicitation by sexual predators or other illegal online communications or activities, including the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's CyberTipline.*

B. *The Board may develop and provide age-appropriate instructional materials and resources to assist local school boards in establishing and implementing the SWAT education program developed pursuant to subsection A. In developing any such instructional materials and resources, the Board may collaborate with law-enforcement agencies, criminal justice agencies, and other nongovernmental organizations with expertise in child online safety issues and human trafficking prevention.*

C. *Each local school board shall adopt policies requiring all elementary and secondary schools in such school division to provide the SWAT education program to students in grades three through 12 at least once each school year. Such policies shall include an option to permit the parent of any child enrolled in any elementary or secondary school in such school division to opt his child out of participating in the SWAT education program.*

2. **That the Board shall make the Safety While Accessing Technology (SWAT) education program created pursuant to this act and any accompanying instructional materials and resources available to all local school boards before the start of the 2024-2025 school year. Each local school board shall implement the SWAT education program beginning with the 2024-2025 school year.**

3. **That the Safety While Accessing Technology (SWAT) education program created pursuant to this act shall be based on the peer-to-peer observational learning and modeling concepts prescribed in Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory by Albert Bandura, PhD.**

INTRODUCED

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