

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 22.1-209.1:4, relating to the Virginia Innovative Remedial Education Pilot Program.

[S 1158]

Approved

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 22.1-209.1:4 as follows:

§ 22.1-209.1:4. Virginia Innovative Remedial Education Pilot Program created.

A. With such funds as may be appropriated for this purpose, the Board of Education shall establish the Virginia Innovative Remedial Education Pilot Program (the "Program") to explore innovative options and instructional approaches for the remediation of students with academic deficiencies. On and after July 1, 1997, the Program shall consist of up to ten pilot projects located in regions throughout the state to provide equitable geographical distribution of such projects. Grants for all such projects shall be awarded on a competitive basis to applicants responding to requests for proposals, giving priority to applicant school divisions that propose to explore creative alternatives and new, pedagogically sound instructional methods to address the following: (i) the educational needs of students who are educationally at-risk or who have failed the Literacy Passport Test; (ii) students who have been identified for remediation, pursuant to §§ 22.1-253.13:1, 22.1-254, and 22.1-254.01; or (iii) barriers to effective remediation of students with academic deficiencies. The Board of Education shall promulgate regulations for the implementation of the program. The Board shall promulgate such regulations to be effective in 280 days or less of the enactment of this section.

B. Upon appropriation of funds for the purposes of this section, the Department of Education shall issue a request for proposals for projects to pilot creative alternatives and new, pedagogically sound instructional methods for remediating students. The first such grants shall be awarded by January 1, 1999. Applications for grants shall include the following components:

1. Specific, measurable goals and objectives and an evaluation component to determine the effectiveness of such innovative pilot projects in accelerating the academic achievement of participating students, reducing the need for remediation, increasing the number of students who pass the Literacy Passport Test, and reducing problems associated with poor student academic performance.

2. A plan for the attraction and participation of teachers specially trained to work with at-risk students, and supportive administrators and staff.

3. A current program of staff development and training.

4. A procedure for obtaining the participation in and support for the pilot project by the pupil's parent and his family.

5. A curriculum developed to accommodate new teaching strategies; student-initiated and group learning; intensive, accelerated instruction designed to establish high standards and academic achievement for participating students; mentoring and individual tutoring; and the use of manipulatives and educational technology.

6. A low pupil-teacher ratio to promote a high level of interaction between the students and the teacher.

7. A procedure for providing pretesting and posttesting and early intervention services at the fourth grade level, and for disseminating the best educational practices resulting from such pilot projects.

8. The identification of and solutions to barriers to remediation, such as transportation, length of the remedial summer school program, and attendant social and economic problems of students and their families.

9. Community outreach to build strong school, business, and community partnerships; to develop joint ventures and linkages between schools and institutions of higher education; to promote family involvement in the educational process; and to emphasize local solutions to local problems.

10. The number of children who may be assigned to the pilot project.

11. A plan for transitioning the participating students into the relevant school division's regular program, or into advanced-level classes.

C. The Board shall require submission of interim evaluation reports of each pilot project biannually and shall compile these reports and other program materials and report the status of such projects on a periodic basis to the relevant standing committees and subcommittees of the General Assembly. The Board shall report the effectiveness of such projects and their components and the Program annually to the Governor and the General Assembly, beginning on October 1, 1999.