

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 1998 SESSION

CHAPTER 128

An Act to amend and reenact § 22.1-202 of the Code of Virginia, relating to instruction in history and principles of flags of United States and Virginia.

[S 174]

Approved March 13, 1998

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 22.1-202 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 22.1-202. Instruction in history and principles of flags of United States and Virginia; pledge of allegiance to American flag; guidelines developed by the Board.

A. Instruction in the history *and principles* of the flag of the United States and the flag of the Commonwealth shall be given in one or more grades in every school division. *The instruction shall include the pledge of allegiance and the appropriate etiquette and conventions for respecting the dignity and appropriate display of such flags.*

B. To promote compliance with constitutional restrictions as well as observance of constitutional rights, the Board of Education shall, in consultation with the Office of the Attorney General, develop guidelines on constitutional rights and restrictions relating to the recitation of the pledge of allegiance to the American flag in public schools. The Board's guidelines shall include, but shall not be limited to, provisions which address the following: the initiative and involvement of local school boards, individual schools, administrators, teachers, and students; the propriety and constitutionality of any recitation or participation requirements; *appropriate etiquette and conventions for respecting the dignity and appropriate display of the flag of the United States and the flag of the Commonwealth*; and relevant state and federal constitutional concerns, such as freedom of speech and religion.

These guidelines shall not be subject to the requirements of the Administrative Process Act (§ 9-6.14:1 et seq.). However, to provide appropriate opportunity for involvement by the general public, teachers, and local school boards, the Board of Education shall conduct public hearings prior to establishing such guidelines. Thirty days prior to conducting such hearings, the Board shall give written notice by mail of the date, time, and place of the hearings to all local school boards and any other persons requesting to be notified of the hearings and publish notice of its intention to hold such hearings in the Virginia Register of Regulations. Interested parties shall be given reasonable opportunity to be heard and present information prior to the adoption of such guidelines.