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HOUSE BILL NO. 435

Offered January 15, 1998

A BILL to amend and reenact § 22.1-253.13:3 of the Code of Virginia, relating to requirements for a high school diploma.

Patrons—Van Landingham, Bennett, Christian, Clement, Councill, Crittenden, Deeds, Dillard, Hull, Jackson, Joannou, Moran, Phillips, Plum, Stump, Tate and Van Yahres; Senator: Reynolds

Referred to Committee on Education

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 22.1-199.2, 22.1-209.1:4, 22.1-253.13:1, 22.1-253.13:3, 22.1-253.13:7, 22.1-254.01, and 22.1-278 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 22.1-253.13:3. Standard 3. Accreditation, other standards and evaluation.

A. The General Assembly recognizes the need for the Board of Education to prescribe requirements to ensure that student progress is measured and that school boards and school personnel are accountable.

B. The Board of Education shall promulgate regulations establishing standards for accreditation pursuant to the Administrative Process Act (§ 9-6.14:1 et seq.) which shall include, but not be limited to, student outcome measures, requirements and guidelines for instructional programs, administrative and instructional staffing levels and positions, pupil personnel services, special education program standards, auxiliary education programs such as library and media services, course and credit requirements for graduation from high school, community relations, and the philosophy, goals, and objectives of public education in Virginia. In revising the standards for accreditation, the Board shall seek to set pupil-teacher ratios for educable mentally retarded (EMR) pupils that do not exceed the pupil-teacher ratios for self-contained classes for pupils with specific learning disabilities. The Board shall review annually the accreditation status of all schools in the Commonwealth.

The requirements for a standard or advanced studies high school diploma shall include one credit in fine or performing arts.

C. The Board shall also establish requirements for certification of teachers, principals, supervisors and other professional staff and determine eligibility for appointment as a local division superintendent.

D. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall develop and the Board of Education shall approve criteria for determining and recognizing educational performance in the Commonwealth's public school divisions and schools. Such criteria, when approved, shall become an integral part of the accreditation process and shall include student outcome measurements. One year following the approval by the Board of such criteria, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall annually identify to the Board those school divisions and schools that exceed or do not meet the approved criteria. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall assist local school boards in the implementation of action plans for increasing educational performance in those school divisions and schools that are identified as not meeting the approved criteria. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall monitor the implementation of and report to the Board of Education on the effectiveness of the corrective actions taken to improve the educational performance in such school divisions and schools.

E. In order to assess the educational progress of students, the Board of Education shall also (i) develop appropriate assessments which may include criterion-referenced tests and alternative assessment instruments which may be used by classroom teachers; (ii) prescribe and provide measures, which may include nationally normed tests, to be designated as the Virginia State Assessment Program, which shall be used to identify students who score in the bottom quartile at selected grade levels; and (iii) prescribe and provide literacy tests in reading, writing and mathematics which shall be administered to students in grade six and to students who have not successfully passed them in grades seven and eight.

F. Each local school board shall maintain schools which meet the standards of accreditation as prescribed by the Board of Education. The accreditation status of all schools in each local school division shall be reviewed annually in public session. Within the time specified by the Board of Education, each school board shall submit corrective action plans for any schools within its school division that have been designated as not meeting the criteria for determining effectiveness as approved by the Board.

G. Each local school board shall also provide teachers and principals with (i) periodic in-service training in preparing tests and other assessment measures and (ii) methods for assessing the progress of individual students, including Standards of Learning assessment materials or other criterion-referenced tests which match locally developed objectives.

H. In order to assess the educational progress of students as individuals and as groups, each local

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60 school board shall require the administration of appropriate assessments, which may include
61 criterion-referenced tests, teacher-made tests and alternative assessment instruments and shall include the
62 Virginia State Assessment Program, the Virginia Literacy Testing Program, and the National Assessment
63 of Educational Progress state-by-state assessment. Each school board shall analyze and report annually,
64 in compliance with any criteria which may be established by the Board of Education, the results from
65 the Virginia State Assessment Program and the Virginia State Literacy Testing Program to the public.