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HOUSE BILL NO. 267

Offered January 12, 2000

A BILL to amend and reenact § 22.1-199.1 of the Code of Virginia and § 22.1-253.13:3 of the Code of Virginia, as it is currently in effect and as it shall become effective, relating to technology resource assistants in the public schools.

Patrons—Rhodes, Bloxom, Darner, Dillard, Hamilton, May and Plum

Referred to Committee on Education

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 22.1-199.1 of the Code of Virginia and § 22.1-253.13:3 of the Code of Virginia, as it is currently in effect and as it shall become effective, are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 22.1-199.1. Programs designed to promote educational opportunities.

A. The General Assembly finds that Virginia educational research supports the conclusion that poor children are more at risk of educational failure than children from more affluent homes and that reduced pupil/teacher ratios and class sizes result in improved academic performance among young children; to this end, the General Assembly establishes a long-term goal of reducing pupil/teacher ratios and class sizes for grades K through 3 in those schools in the Commonwealth with high or moderate concentrations of at-risk students.

Effective July 1, 1996, and with such funds as are provided in the appropriation act for this purpose, there is hereby established the statewide voluntary pupil/teacher ratio and class size reduction program for the purpose of reaching the long-term goal of statewide voluntary pupil/teacher ratio and class size reductions for grades K through 3 in schools with high or moderate concentrations of at-risk students, consistent with the provisions first provided during the 1994-1995 school year.

In order to facilitate these primary grade ratio and class size reductions, the Department of Education shall calculate the state funding of these voluntary ratio and class size reductions based on the incremental cost of providing the lower class sizes according to the greater of the division average per-pupil cost of all divisions or the actual division per-pupil cost. Localities shall provide matching funds for these voluntary ratio and class size reductions based on the composite index of local ability to pay. School divisions shall notify the Department of Education of their intention to implement the reduced ratios and class sizes in one or more of their qualifying schools by August 1 of each year. By March 31 of each year, school divisions shall forward data substantiating that each participating school has a complying pupil/teacher ratio.

In developing the proposed 1996-1998 biennium budget for public education, the Board of Education shall include funding for these ratios and class sizes. Effective July 1, 1996, the ratios and class sizes shall be included in the annual budget for public education.

B. The General Assembly finds that educational technology is one of the most important components, along with highly skilled teachers, in ensuring the delivery of quality public school education throughout the Commonwealth. Therefore, the Board of Education shall strive to incorporate technological studies within the teaching of all disciplines. Further, the General Assembly notes that educational technology can only be successful if teachers and administrators are provided adequate training and assistance. To this end, the following program is established. With such funds as are appropriated for this purpose, the Board of Education shall award to the several school divisions grants for expanded access to educational technology. Funding for educational technology training for instructional personnel shall be provided as set forth in the appropriation act, including (i) funds for providing a *additional* technology resource assistant to serve every elementary school assistants to serve the public schools in this Commonwealth beginning on July 1, 1998, and (ii) funds for implementing the Family Involvement in Technology program as established in § 22.1-212.2:3. Any local school board accepting these funds to hire *additional* technology resource assistants or to implement the Family Involvement in Technology program shall commit to providing the required matching funds, based on the composite index of local ability to pay. Each qualifying school board shall establish an individualized technology plan, which shall be approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, for integrating technology into the classroom and into schoolwide instructional programs. The grants shall be prioritized as follows:

1. In the 1994 biennium, the first priority for these funds shall be to automate the library media centers and provide network capabilities in Virginia's elementary, middle and high schools, or combination thereof, in order to ensure access to the statewide library and other information networks. If any elementary, middle or high school has already met this priority, the 1994 biennium grant shall be

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60 used to provide other educational technologies identified in the relevant division's approved technology
61 plan, such as multimedia and telecomputing packages, integrated learning systems, laptop computer loan
62 programs, vocational technology laboratories or other electronic techniques designed to enhance public
63 education and to facilitate teacher training in and implementation of effective instructional technology.
64 The Board shall also distribute, as provided in the appropriation act, funds to support the purchase of
65 electronic reference materials for use in the statewide automated reference system.

66 2. In the 1996 biennium, the first priority for funding shall be consistent with those components of
67 the Board of Education's revised six-year technology plan which focus on (i) retrofitting and upgrading
68 existing school buildings to efficiently use educational technology; (ii) providing (a) one network-ready
69 multimedia microcomputer for each classroom, (b) a five-to-one ratio of pupils to network-ready
70 microcomputers, (c) graphing calculators and relevant scientific probes/sensors as required by the
71 Standards of Learning, and (d) training and professional development on available technologies and
72 software to all levels and positions; and (iii) assisting school divisions in developing integrated voice-,
73 video-, and data-connectivity to local, national and international resources. This funding may be used to
74 implement a local school division's long-range technology plan, at the discretion of the relevant school
75 board, if the local plan meets or exceeds the goals and standards of the Board's revised six-year
76 technology plan and has been approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

77 3. The Departments of Education, Information Technology, and General Services shall coordinate
78 master contracts for the purchase by local school boards of the aforementioned educational technologies
79 and reference materials.

80 4. Beginning on July 1, 1998, a technology replacement program shall be, with such funds as may be
81 appropriated for this purpose, implemented to replace obsolete educational hardware and software. As
82 provided in § 22.1-129 D, school boards may donate obsolete educational technology hardware and
83 software which are being replaced. Any such donations shall be offered to other school divisions and to
84 preschool programs in the Commonwealth.

85 5. In fiscal year 2000, the Board of Education shall, with such funds as are appropriated for this
86 purpose, contract for the development or purchase of interactive educational software and other
87 instructional materials designed as tutorials to improve achievement on the Standards of Learning
88 assessments. Such interactive educational software and other instructional materials may be used in
89 media centers, computer laboratories, libraries, after-school or before-school programs or remedial
90 programs by teachers and other instructional personnel or provided to parents and students to be used in
91 the home. This interactive educational software and other instructional materials shall only be used as
92 supplemental tools for instruction, remediation, and acceleration of the learning required by the K
93 through 12 Standards of Learning objectives.

94 Consistent with school board policies designed to improve school-community communications and
95 guidelines for providing instructional assistance in the home, each school division shall strive to
96 establish a voice mail communication system after regular school hours for parents, families, and
97 teachers by the year 2000.

98 C. The General Assembly finds that effective prevention programs designed to assist children at risk
99 of school failure and dropout are practical mechanisms for reducing violent and criminal activity and for
100 ensuring that Virginia's children will reach adulthood with the skills necessary to succeed in the
101 twenty-first century; to this end, the following program is hereby established. With such funds as are
102 appropriated for this purpose, the General Assembly hereby establishes a grant program to be disbursed
103 by the Department of Education to schools and community-based organizations to provide quality
104 preschool programs for at-risk four-year-olds who are unserved by Head Start programs and for
105 five-year-olds who are not eligible to attend kindergarten.

106 The grants shall be used to provide at least half-day services for the length of the school year for
107 at-risk four-year-old children who are unserved by Head Start programs and for five-year-olds who are
108 not eligible to attend kindergarten. The services shall include quality preschool education, health
109 services, social services, parental involvement including activities to promote family literacy, and
110 transportation. The Department of Education, in cooperation with such other state agencies which may
111 coordinate child day care and early childhood programs, shall establish guidelines for quality preschool
112 education and criteria for the service components, consistent with the findings of the November 1993
113 study by the Board of Education, the Department of Education, and the Council on Child Day Care and
114 Early Childhood Programs. School divisions may apply for and be granted waivers from these guidelines
115 by the Department of Education.

116 During the 1995-1996 fiscal year, the Board of Education shall, with such funds as are appropriated
117 for this purpose, distribute grants, based on an allocation formula providing the state share of the grant
118 per child, as specified in the appropriation act, for thirty percent of the unserved at-risk four-year-olds in
119 the Commonwealth pursuant to the funding provided in the appropriation act. During the 1996-1997
120 fiscal year and thereafter, grants shall be distributed, with such funds as are appropriated for this
121 purpose, based on an allocation formula providing the state share of the grant per child, as specified in

the appropriation act, for at least sixty percent of the unserved at-risk four-year-olds and five-year-olds who are not eligible to attend kindergarten in the Commonwealth, such sixty percent to be calculated by adding services for thirty percent more of the unserved at-risk children to the thirty percent of unserved at-risk children in each locality provided funding in the appropriation act.

Local school boards may elect to serve more than sixty percent of the at-risk four-year-olds and may use federal funds or local funds for this expansion or may seek funding through this grant program for such purposes. Grants may be awarded, if funds are available in excess of the funding for the sixty percent allocation, to expand services to at-risk four-year-olds beyond the sixty percent goal.

In order for a locality to qualify for these grants, the local governing body shall commit to providing the required matching funds, based on the composite index of local ability to pay. Localities may use, for the purposes of meeting the local match, local, or other nonstate expenditures for existing qualifying programs and shall also continue to pursue and coordinate other funding sources, including child care subsidies. Funds received through this program shall be used to supplement, not supplant, any local funds currently provided for preschool programs within the locality.

D. The General Assembly finds that local autonomy in making decisions on local educational needs and priorities results in effective grass-roots efforts to improve education in the Commonwealth's public schools only when coupled with sufficient state funding; to this end, the following block grant program is hereby established. With such funds as are provided in the appropriation act, the Department of Education shall distribute block grants to localities to enable compliance with the Commonwealth's requirements for school divisions in effect on January 1, 1995. Therefore, for the purpose of such compliance, the block grant herein established shall consist of a sum equal to the amount appropriated in the appropriation act for the covered programs, including the at-risk add-on program; dropout prevention, specifically Project YES; Project Discovery; English as a second language programs, including programs for overage, nonschooled students; Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID); the Homework Assistance Program; programs initiated under the Virginia Guaranteed Assistance Program, except that such funds shall not be used to pay any college expenses of participating students; Reading Recovery; and school/community health centers. Each school board may use any funds received through the block grant to implement the covered programs and other programs designed to save the Commonwealth's children from educational failure.

E. In order to reduce pupil/teacher ratios and class sizes in elementary schools, from such funds as may be appropriated for this purpose, each school board may employ additional classroom teachers, remedial teachers, and reading specialists for each of its elementary schools over the requirements of the Standards of Quality. State and local funding for such additional classroom teachers, remedial teachers, and reading specialists shall be apportioned as provided in the appropriation act.

§ 22.1-253.13:3. (Effective until July 1, 2003) 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 establishing course and credit requirements for a high school diploma, the Board shall provide for the selection of integrated learning courses meeting the Standards of Learning and approved by the Board to satisfy graduation credit requirements which shall include Standards of Learning Testing, as necessary.

The Board shall include in the student outcome measures which are required by the Standards for Accreditation, end-of-course or end-of-grade tests for various grade levels and classes, as determined by the Board, in accordance with the Standards of Learning. These Standards of Learning assessments shall include, but need not be limited to, end-of-course or end-of-grade tests for English, mathematics, science, and social studies.

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, performing, or practical arts. The requirements for a standard high school diploma may include a concentration of courses selected from a variety of options. Such concentration may be planned to

183 ensure the completion of a focused sequence of elective courses leading to further education or
184 preparation for employment developed by the school division consistent with Board of Education
185 guidelines and as approved by the local school board.

186 The Board's regulations on accrediting schools shall include in the minimum staffing requirements,
187 according to the type of school and student enrollment, requirements for employment of (i) principals in
188 elementary schools, one half-time to 299 students, one full-time at 300 students; principals in middle
189 schools, one full-time, to be employed on a twelve-month basis; principals in high schools, one
190 full-time, to be employed on a twelve-month basis; (ii) assistant principals in elementary schools, one
191 half-time at 600 students, one full-time at 900 students; assistant principals in middle schools, one
192 full-time for each 600 students; assistant principals in high schools, one full-time for each 600 students;
193 (iii) librarians in elementary schools, one part-time to 299 students, one full-time at 300 students;
194 librarians in middle schools, one-half time to 299 students, one full-time at 300 students, two full-time
195 at 1000 students; librarians in high schools, one half-time to 299 students, one full-time at 300 students,
196 two full-time at 1000 students; (iv) guidance counselors in middle schools, one period per 80 students,
197 one full-time at 400 students, one additional period per 80 students or major fraction thereof; guidance
198 counselors in high schools, one period per 70 students, one full-time at 350 students, one additional
199 period per 70 students or major fraction thereof; (v) clerical personnel in elementary schools, part-time
200 to 299 students, one full-time at 300 students; clerical personnel in middle schools, one full-time and
201 one additional full-time for each 600 students beyond 200 students and one full-time for the library at
202 750 students; clerical personnel in high schools, one full-time and one additional full-time for each 600
203 students beyond 200 students and one full-time for the library at 750 students; ~~and~~ (vi) reading
204 specialists in elementary schools, one full-time in each elementary school at the discretion of the local
205 school board; *and (vii) one full-time technology resource assistant in each elementary, middle, high, or*
206 *combined school.* A combined school, such as kindergarten through twelve, shall meet at all grade levels
207 the staffing requirements for the highest grade level in that school; this requirement shall apply to all
208 staff, except for guidance counselors *and technology resource assistants*, and shall be based on the
209 school's total enrollment; guidance counselor staff requirements shall, however, be based on the
210 enrollment at the various school organization levels, i.e., middle or high school. The Board of Education
211 may grant waivers from these staffing levels upon request from local school boards seeking to
212 implement experimental or innovative programs that are not consistent with these staffing levels.

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

215 D. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall develop and the Board of Education shall approve
216 criteria for determining and recognizing educational performance in the Commonwealth's public school
217 divisions and schools. Such criteria, when approved, shall become an integral part of the accreditation
218 process and shall include student outcome measurements. One year following the approval by the Board
219 of such criteria, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall annually identify to the Board those
220 school divisions and schools that exceed or do not meet the approved criteria. Such identification shall
221 include an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of public education programs in the various school
222 divisions in Virginia and recommendations to the General Assembly for further enhancing student
223 learning uniformly across the Commonwealth. In recognizing educational performance in the school
224 divisions, the Board shall include consideration of special school division accomplishments, such as
225 numbers of dual enrollments and students in Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate
226 courses, and participation in academic year Governor's Schools.

227 The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall assist local school boards in the implementation of
228 action plans for increasing educational performance in those school divisions and schools that are
229 identified as not meeting the approved criteria. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall monitor
230 the implementation of and report to the Board of Education on the effectiveness of the corrective actions
231 taken to improve the educational performance in such school divisions and schools.

232 The Department of Education shall conduct technical assistance visits for local school divisions.
233 Schools accredited with a warning shall be given priority for such assistance, which shall include an
234 analysis of relevant school data and the development and implementation of improvement plans to assist
235 such schools in improving their accreditation status.

236 E. In order to assess the educational progress of students, the Board of Education shall also (i)
237 develop appropriate assessments, which may include criterion-referenced tests and alternative assessment
238 instruments which may be used by classroom teachers; (ii) prescribe and provide measures, which may
239 include nationally normed tests, to be designated as the Virginia State Assessment Program, which shall
240 be used to identify students who score in the bottom quartile at selected grade levels; and (iii) prescribe
241 and provide literacy tests in reading, writing and mathematics which shall be administered to students in
242 grade six and to students who have not successfully passed them in grades seven and eight. The Board
243 of Education is authorized to pursue all available civil remedies for breaches in test security.

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

I. To assist school divisions in implementing those programs and practices that will enhance pupil academic performance and improve family and community involvement in the public schools, and from such funds as may be appropriated for such purpose, there shall be established within the Department of Education a unit to conduct evaluative studies and to provide the resources and technical assistance to increase the capacity of school divisions to deliver quality instruction. Such unit shall identify and analyze effective instructional programs and practices and professional development initiatives; evaluate the success of programs encouraging parental and family involvement; assess changes in student outcomes prompted by family involvement; and collect and disseminate among school divisions information regarding effective instructional programs and practices, initiatives promoting family and community involvement, and potential funding and support sources. Such unit may also provide resources supporting professional development for administrators and teachers. In providing such information, resources, and other services to school divisions, the unit shall give priority to those divisions demonstrating a less than seventy percent passing rate on (i) all three Literacy Passport tests by students taking these tests for the first time or (ii) the Standards of Learning assessment tests.

§ 22.1-253.13:3. (Effective July 1, 2003) 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 establishing course and credit requirements for a high school diploma, the Board shall provide for the selection of integrated learning courses meeting the Standards of Learning and approved by the Board to satisfy graduation credit requirements which shall include Standards of Learning Testing, as necessary.

The Board shall include in the student outcome measures, which are required by the Standards for Accreditation, end-of-course or end-of-grade tests for various grade levels and classes, as determined by the Board, in accordance with the Standards of Learning. These Standards of Learning assessments shall include, but need not be limited to, end-of-course or end-of-grade tests for English, mathematics, science, and social studies.

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, performing, or practical arts. The requirements for a standard high school diploma shall, however, include at least two sequential electives and may include a concentration of courses selected from a variety of options. Such concentration may be planned to ensure the completion of a focused sequence of elective courses leading to further education or preparation for employment developed by the school division consistent with Board of Education guidelines and as approved by the local school board.

The Board's regulations on accrediting schools shall include in the minimum staffing requirements,

according to the type of school and student enrollment, requirements for employment of (i) principals in elementary schools, one half-time to 299 students, one full-time at 300 students; principals in middle schools, one full-time, to be employed on a twelve-month basis; principals in high schools, one full-time, to be employed on a twelve-month basis; (ii) assistant principals in elementary schools, one half-time at 600 students, one full-time at 900 students; assistant principals in middle schools, one full-time for each 600 students; assistant principals in high schools, one full-time for each 600 students; (iii) librarians in elementary schools, one part-time to 299 students, one full-time at 300 students; librarians in middle schools, one-half time to 299 students, one full-time at 300 students, two full-time at 1000 students; librarians in high schools, one half-time to 299 students, one full-time at 300 students, two full-time at 1000 students; (iv) guidance counselors in middle schools, one period per 80 students, one full-time at 400 students, one additional period per 80 students or major fraction thereof; guidance counselors in high schools, one period per 70 students, one full-time at 350 students, one additional period per 70 students or major fraction thereof; (v) clerical personnel in elementary schools, part-time to 299 students, one full-time at 300 students; clerical personnel in middle schools, one full-time and one additional full-time for each 600 students beyond 200 students and one full-time for the library at 750 students; clerical personnel in high schools, one full-time and one additional full-time for each 600 students beyond 200 students and one full-time for the library at 750 students; ~~and~~ (vi) reading specialists in elementary schools, one full-time in each elementary school at the discretion of the local school board; *and (vii) one full-time technology resource assistant in each elementary, middle, high, or combined school.* A combined school, such as kindergarten through twelve, shall meet at all grade levels the staffing requirements for the highest grade level in that school; this requirement shall apply to all staff, except for guidance counselors *and technology resource assistants*, and shall be based on the school's total enrollment; guidance counselor staff requirements shall, however, be based on the enrollment at the various school organization levels, i.e., middle or high school. The Board of Education may grant waivers from these staffing levels upon request from local school boards seeking to implement experimental or innovative programs that are not consistent with these staffing levels.

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. Such identification shall include an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of public education programs in the various school divisions in Virginia and recommendations to the General Assembly for further enhancing student learning uniformly across the Commonwealth. In recognizing educational performance in the school divisions, the Board shall include consideration of special school division accomplishments, such as numbers of dual enrollments and students in Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses, and participation in academic year Governor's Schools.

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.

The Department of Education shall conduct technical assistance visits for local school divisions. Schools accredited with a warning shall be given priority for such assistance, which shall include an analysis of relevant school data and the development and implementation of improvement plans to assist such schools in improving their accreditation status.

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 and (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. The Board of Education is authorized to pursue all available civil remedies for breaches in test security.

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

I. To assist school divisions in implementing those programs and practices that will enhance pupil academic performance and improve family and community involvement in the public schools, and from such funds as may be appropriated for such purpose, there shall be established within the Department of Education a unit to conduct evaluative studies and to provide the resources and technical assistance to increase the capacity of school divisions to deliver quality instruction. Such unit shall identify and analyze effective instructional programs and practices and professional development initiatives; evaluate the success of programs encouraging parental and family involvement; assess changes in student outcomes prompted by family involvement; and collect and disseminate among school divisions information regarding effective instructional programs and practices, initiatives promoting family and community involvement, and potential funding and support sources. Such unit may also provide resources supporting professional development for administrators and teachers. In providing such information, resources, and other services to school divisions, the unit shall give priority to those divisions demonstrating a less than seventy percent passing rate on (i) all three Literacy Passport tests by students taking these tests for the first time or (ii) the Standards of Learning assessment tests.