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HOUSE BILL NO. 504

Offered January 11, 2012

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A *BILL to amend and reenact §§ 9.1-184 and 22.1-279.8 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the Virginia Center for School Safety; antibullying training.*

Patrons—Dance and Plum

Referred to Committee on Education

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That §§ 9.1-184 and 22.1-279.8 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 9.1-184. Virginia Center for School Safety created; duties.

A. From such funds as may be appropriated, the Virginia Center for School Safety (the "Center") is hereby established within the Department. The Center shall:

1. Provide training for Virginia public school personnel in school safety, *on evidence-based antibullying tactics*, and *in the effective identification of students who may be at risk for violent behavior and in need of special services or assistance*;

2. Serve as a resource and referral center for Virginia school divisions by conducting research, sponsoring workshops, and providing information regarding current school safety concerns, such as conflict management and peer mediation, *bullying*, school facility design and technology, current state and federal statutory and regulatory school safety requirements, and legal and constitutional issues regarding school safety and individual rights;

3. Maintain and disseminate information to local school divisions on effective school safety initiatives in Virginia and across the nation;

4. Collect, analyze, and disseminate various Virginia school safety data, including school safety audit information submitted to it pursuant to § 22.1-279.8, collected by the Department;

5. Encourage the development of partnerships between the public and private sectors to promote school safety in Virginia;

6. Provide technical assistance to Virginia school divisions in the development and implementation of initiatives promoting school safety;

7. Develop a memorandum of understanding between the ~~Commissioner~~ *Director* of the Department of Criminal Justice Services and the Superintendent of Public Instruction to ensure collaboration and coordination of roles and responsibilities in areas of mutual concern, such as school safety audits and crime prevention; and

8. Provide training for and certification of school security officers, as defined in § 9.1-101 and consistent with § 9.1-110.

B. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall cooperate with the Center and, upon request, assist the Center in the performance of its duties and responsibilities.

§ 22.1-279.8. School safety audits and school crisis, emergency management, and medical emergency response plans required.

A. For the purposes of this section, unless the context requires otherwise:

"School crisis, emergency management, and medical emergency response plan" means the essential procedures, operations, and assignments required to prevent, manage, and respond to a critical event or emergency, including natural disasters involving fire, flood, tornadoes, or other severe weather; loss or disruption of power, water, communications or shelter; bus or other accidents; medical emergencies, including cardiac arrest and other life-threatening medical emergencies; student or staff member deaths; explosions; bomb threats; gun, knife or other weapons threats; spills or exposures to hazardous substances; the presence of unauthorized persons or trespassers; the loss, disappearance or kidnapping of a student; hostage situations; violence on school property or at school activities; incidents involving acts of terrorism; and other incidents posing a serious threat of harm to students, personnel, or facilities. The plan shall include a provision that the Department of Criminal Justice Services and the Virginia Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund shall be contacted immediately to deploy assistance in the event of an emergency as defined in the emergency response plan when there are victims as defined in § 19.2-11.01, as well as current contact information for both.

"School safety audit" means a written assessment of the safety conditions in each public school to (i) identify and, if necessary, develop solutions for physical safety concerns, including building security issues and (ii) identify and evaluate any patterns of student safety concerns occurring on school property or at school-sponsored events. Solutions and responses shall include recommendations for structural

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59 adjustments, changes in school safety procedures, and revisions to the school board's standards for
60 student conduct.

61 B. The Virginia Center for School Safety shall develop a list of items to be reviewed and evaluated
62 in the school safety audits required by this section. Such items shall include those incidents reported to
63 school authorities pursuant to § 22.1-279.3:1.

64 The Virginia Center for School Safety shall prescribe a standardized report format for school safety
65 audits, additional reporting criteria, and procedures for report submission, which may include instructions
66 for electronic submission. *School safety audits may include student surveys of safety concerns such as*
67 *bullying, gang activity, and acts of violence.*

68 Each local school board shall require all schools under its supervisory control to annually conduct
69 school safety audits as defined in this section and consistent with such list.

70 The results of such school safety audits shall be made public within 90 days of completion. The
71 local school board shall retain authority to withhold or limit the release of any security plans and
72 specific vulnerability assessment components as provided in subdivision 7 of § 2.2-3705.2. Each school
73 shall maintain a copy of the school safety audit, which may exclude such security plans and
74 vulnerability assessment components, within the office of the school principal and shall make a copy of
75 such report available for review upon written request.

76 Each school shall submit a copy of its school safety audit to the relevant school division
77 superintendent. The division superintendent shall collate and submit all such school safety audits, in the
78 prescribed format and manner of submission, to the Virginia Center for School Safety.

79 C. The school board may establish a school safety audit committee to consist of representatives of
80 parents, teachers, local law-enforcement agencies, judicial and public safety personnel, and the
81 community at large. The school safety audit committee shall evaluate, in accordance with the directions
82 of the local school board, the safety of each school and submit a plan for improving school safety at a
83 public meeting of the local school board.

84 D. Each school board shall ensure that every school that it supervises shall develop a written school
85 crisis, emergency management, and medical emergency response plan, consistent with the definition
86 provided in this section. The Department of Education and the Virginia Center for School Safety shall
87 provide technical assistance to the school divisions of the Commonwealth in the development of the
88 school crisis, emergency management, and medical emergency response plans that describe the
89 components of a medical emergency response plan developed in coordination with local emergency
90 medical services providers, the training of school personnel and students to respond to a life-threatening
91 emergency, and the equipment required for this emergency response. The local school board shall
92 annually review the written school crisis, emergency management, and medical emergency response
93 plans. The local school board shall have the authority to withhold or limit the review of any security
94 plans and specific vulnerability assessment components as provided in subdivision 7 of § 2.2-3705.2.
95 The local school division superintendent shall certify this review in writing to the Virginia Center on
96 School Safety no later than August 31 of each year.

97 Upon consultation with local school boards, division superintendents, the Virginia Center for School
98 Safety, and the Coordinator of Emergency Management, the Board of Education shall develop, and may
99 revise as it deems necessary, a model school crisis, emergency management, and medical emergency
100 response plan for the purpose of assisting the public schools in Virginia in developing viable, effective
101 crisis, emergency management, and medical emergency response plans. Such model shall set forth
102 recommended effective procedures and means by which parents can contact the relevant school or
103 school division regarding the location and safety of their school children and by which school officials
104 may contact parents, with parental approval, during a critical event or emergency.