

# VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2014 SESSION

## CHAPTER 436

*An Act to amend and reenact §§ 22.1-212.2, 22.1-212.24, and 22.1-212.25 of the Code of Virginia, relating to Virtual Virginia; online courses created by local school boards.*

[H 1115]

Approved March 31, 2014

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That §§ 22.1-212.2, 22.1-212.24, and 22.1-212.25 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:**

**§ 22.1-212.2. Virtual Virginia.**

From such funds as are appropriated, the Department of Education shall establish a statewide electronic classroom to be known as the Virtual Virginia Program. Virtual Virginia shall be made available to every public high school in Virginia.

The Department may utilize the services of the Commonwealth's educational television stations and other providers, as well as any other appropriate technology for the purposes of implementing Virtual Virginia.

The services of this program shall be limited to educational purposes. Educational purposes shall include, but not be limited to, instruction in subject areas that are not available in all schools and ~~in-service~~ in-service training for instructional, administrative and support personnel.

*The Department may contract with one or more local school boards that have created online courses to make one or more such courses available to other school divisions through the Virtual Virginia Program. The Department shall approve all courses offered through Virtual Virginia, including those made available by local school boards to other school divisions. A school board that makes one or more of its online courses available to other school divisions through Virtual Virginia (i) shall not be considered a multidivision online provider pursuant to § 22.1-212.23 and (ii) may charge a per-course or per-student fee to school divisions to defray the costs of developing the course and providing course instruction using teachers employed by the offering school board. The Department shall approve any such fee schedule before a school board offers any such online courses through Virtual Virginia.*

*The Department shall establish the Virtual Learning Advisory Committee, which shall consist of one superintendent or his designee from each of the eight superintendent's regions, the Superintendent of Public Instruction or his designee, and such other members as the Department deems appropriate, not to exceed three additional members. The contractor that manages Virtual Virginia shall serve as a nonvoting ex officio member. The Committee shall advise the Department on (i) online courses, in-service training, and digital instructional resources that school divisions need to meet the Commonwealth's graduation requirements and (ii) strategic planning to expand blended and online learning opportunities in Virginia's public schools, including cost-effective access to high-need and low-demand courses, training, content, and digital resources.*

**§ 22.1-212.24. Approval of multidivision online providers; contracts with local school boards.**

A. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall develop, and the Board of Education shall approve, (i) the criteria and application process for approving multidivision online providers; (ii) a process for monitoring approved multidivision online providers; (iii) a process for revocation of the approval of a previously approved multidivision online provider; and (iv) an appeals process for a multidivision online provider whose approval was revoked or whose application was denied. The process developed under this subsection shall require approvals and revocations to be determined by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and either the denial of an application or revocation of approval may be appealed to the Board of Education for review. The approval of a multidivision online provider under this section shall be effective until the approval is revoked, for cause, pursuant to the terms of this section. Any notice of revocation of approval of a multidivision online provider or rejection of an application by a multidivision online provider shall state the grounds for such action with reasonable specificity and give reasonable notice to the multidivision online provider to appeal. These criteria and processes shall be adopted by January 31, 2011.

B. In developing the criteria for approval pursuant to subsection A, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall (i) require multidivision online providers to be accredited by a national, regional, or state accreditation program approved by the Board; (ii) require such courses or programs, pupil performance standards, and curriculum to meet or exceed any applicable Standards of Learning and Standards of Accreditation; (iii) require any educational objectives and assessments used to measure pupil progress toward achievement of the school's pupil performance standards to be in accordance with the Board's Standards of Accreditation and all applicable state and federal laws; ~~and~~ (iv) require such courses or programs to maintain minimum staffing requirements appropriate for virtual school programs;

and (v) publish the criteria for approval of multidivision online providers on its website, including any applicable deadlines, fees, and guidelines.

C. The Department of Education may charge a multidivision online provider applicant or a local school board requesting to offer a course through Virtual Virginia a fee not to exceed the costs required to ensure proper evaluation and approval of such requests. The Department shall establish and publish a fee schedule for purposes of this subsection.

D. Local school boards may enter into contracts, consistent with the criteria approved by the Board pursuant to this section, with approved private or nonprofit organizations to provide multidivision online courses and virtual school programs. Such contracts shall be exempt from the Virginia Public Procurement Act (§ 2.2-4300 et seq.).

**§ 22.1-212.25. Information regarding online courses and virtual programs; report.**

A. The Department of Education shall develop and maintain a website that provides objective information for students, parents, and educators regarding online courses and virtual programs offered through local school boards by multidivision online providers that have been approved in accordance with § 22.1-212.24 and courses offered through the Virtual Virginia Program. The website shall include information regarding the overall instructional programs, the specific content of individual online courses and online programs, a direct link to each multidivision online provider's website, how to register for online learning programs and courses, teacher qualifications, course completion rates, and other evaluative and comparative information. The website shall also provide information regarding the process and criteria for approving multidivision online providers. Multidivision online providers shall provide the Department of Education the required information for the website as a condition of maintaining Board approval.

B. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall develop model policies and procedures regarding student access to online courses and online learning programs that may be used by local school divisions.

Nothing in this article shall be deemed to require a local school division to adopt model policies or procedures developed pursuant to this section.

C. Beginning November 1, 2011, and annually thereafter, the Board of Education shall include in its annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly information regarding multidivision online learning during the previous school year. The information shall include but not be limited to student demographics, course enrollment data, parental satisfaction, aggregated student course completion and passing rates, and activities and outcomes of course and provider approval reviews. The November 1, 2011, report shall be an interim progress report and include information on the criteria and processes adopted by the Board and outcomes of provider applications.

D. By July 1, 2011, local school boards shall post on their websites information regarding online courses and programs that are available through the school division and Virtual Virginia. Such information shall include but not be limited to the types of online courses and programs available to students through the school division, when the school division will pay course fees and other costs for nonresident students, and the granting of high school credit.