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HOUSE BILL NO. 1627

Offered January 14, 2015

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A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 22.1-200.03 and 22.1-253.13:4 of the Code of Virginia, relating to economics education and financial literacy; credit; alternative assessment.

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Referred to Committee on Education

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 22.1-200.03 and 22.1-253.13:4 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 22.1-200.03. Economics education and financial literacy required in middle and high school grades; Board of Education to establish objectives for economic education and financial literacy; banking-at-school programs.

A. By July 1, 2006 Except as provided in subdivision D 9 of § 22.1-253.13:4, instruction in the principles of the American economic system shall be required in the public middle and high schools of the Commonwealth to promote economics education and financial literacy of students and to further the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for responsible citizenship in a constitutional democracy.

B. The Board of Education shall develop and approve objectives for economics education and financial literacy at the middle and high school levels, that shall be required of all students, and shall provide for the systematic infusion of economic principles in the relevant Standards of Learning, and in career and technical education programs. The objectives shall include, but not be limited to, personal living and finances; personal and business money management skills; opening an account in a financial institution and judging the quality of a financial institution's services; balancing a checkbook; completing a loan application; the implications of an inheritance; the basics of personal insurance policies; consumer rights and responsibilities; dealing with salesmen and merchants; debt management; managing retail and credit card debt; state and federal tax computation; local tax assessments; computation of interest rates by various mechanisms; understanding simple contracts; and learning how to contest an incorrect bill.

C. To facilitate the objectives of economics education and financial literacy through practical experiences, the Department shall confer with the State Corporation Commission's Bureau of Financial Institutions, and financial and relevant professional organizations in the development of guidelines for such literacy objectives. The guidelines shall include, but not be limited to, (i) rules and policies governing the establishment, operation, and dissolution of school banks and school credit unions; (ii) written agreements between partnering public schools and financial institutions, including the disposition of funds donated or other financial contributions provided by the partnering financial institution; and (iii) such other matters as the Department may deem appropriate.

D. The Board shall not be required to evaluate student achievement concerning economics education and financial literacy objectives in the Standards of Learning assessments required by § 22.1-253.13:3.

E. For the purposes of this section, "at-risk and disadvantaged students" means students having socioeconomic or cultural risk factors that research indicates may negatively influence academic achievement or may hinder an individual in reaching his life goals.

For the purposes of this section, "financial institution" means a bank, savings and loan association, savings bank, or credit union authorized to conduct business in the Commonwealth.

For the purposes of this section, "high school" includes grades nine through 12.

For the purposes of this section, "middle school" includes grades six through eight.

§ 22.1-253.13:4. Standard 4. Student achievement and graduation requirements.

A. Each local school board shall award diplomas to all secondary school students, including students who transfer from nonpublic schools or from home instruction, who earn the units of credit prescribed by the Board of Education, pass the prescribed tests, and meet such other requirements as may be prescribed by the local school board and approved by the Board of Education. Provisions shall be made to facilitate the transfer and appropriate grade placement of students from other public secondary schools, from nonpublic schools, or from home instruction as outlined in the standards for accreditation. Course credits earned for online courses taken in the Department of Education's Virtual Virginia program shall transfer to Virginia public schools in accordance with provisions of the standards for accreditation. Further, reasonable accommodation to meet the requirements for diplomas shall be provided for otherwise qualified students with disabilities as needed.

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59 In addition, each local school board may devise, vis-a-vis the award of diplomas to secondary school
60 students, a mechanism for calculating class rankings that takes into consideration whether the student has
61 taken a required class more than one time and has had any prior earned grade for such required class
62 expunged.

63 Each local school board shall notify the parents of rising eleventh and twelfth grade students of (i)
64 the number and subject area requirements of standard and verified units of credit required for graduation
65 pursuant to the standards for accreditation and (ii) the remaining number and subject area requirements
66 of such units of credit the individual student requires for graduation.

67 B. Students identified as disabled who complete the requirements of their individualized education
68 programs shall be awarded special diplomas by local school boards.

69 Each local school board shall notify the parent of such students with disabilities who have an
70 individualized education program and who fail to meet the requirements for a standard or advanced
71 studies diploma of the student's right to a free and appropriate education to age 21, inclusive, pursuant
72 to Article 2 (§ 22.1-213 et seq.) of Chapter 13.

73 C. Students who have completed a prescribed course of study as defined by the local school board
74 shall be awarded certificates of program completion by local school boards if they are not eligible to
75 receive a Board of Education-approved diploma.

76 Each local school board shall provide notification of the right to a free public education for students
77 who have not reached 20 years of age on or before August 1 of the school year, pursuant to Chapter 1
78 (§ 22.1-1 et seq.), to the parent of students who fail to graduate or who have failed to achieve the
79 number of verified units of credit required for graduation as provided in the standards for accreditation.
80 If such student who does not graduate or achieve such verified units of credit is a student for whom
81 English is a second language, the local school board shall notify the parent of the student's opportunity
82 for a free public education in accordance with § 22.1-5.

83 D. In establishing course and credit requirements for a high school diploma, the Board shall:

84 1. Provide for the selection of integrated learning courses meeting the Standards of Learning and
85 approved by the Board to satisfy graduation credit requirements, which shall include Standards of
86 Learning testing, as necessary.

87 2. Establish the requirements for a standard and an advanced studies high school diploma, which
88 shall each include at least one credit in fine or performing arts or career and technical education and one
89 credit in United States and Virginia history. The requirements for a standard high school diploma shall,
90 however, include at least two sequential electives chosen from a concentration of courses selected from a
91 variety of options that may be planned to ensure the completion of a focused sequence of elective
92 courses. Such focused sequence of elective courses shall provide a foundation for further education or
93 training or preparation for employment. The advanced studies diploma shall be the recommended
94 diploma for students pursuing baccalaureate study. Both the standard and the advanced studies diploma
95 shall prepare students for post-secondary education and the career readiness required by the
96 Commonwealth's economy.

97 Beginning with first-time ninth grade students in the 2013-2014 school year, requirements for the
98 standard diploma shall include a requirement to earn a career and technical education credential that has
99 been approved by the Board, that could include, but not be limited to, the successful completion of an
100 industry certification, a state licensure examination, a national occupational competency assessment, or
101 the Virginia workplace readiness skills assessment.

102 Beginning with first-time ninth grade students in the 2016-2017 school year, requirements for the
103 standard and advanced diplomas shall include a requirement to be trained in emergency first aid,
104 cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and the use of automated external defibrillators, including hands-on
105 practice of the skills necessary to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

106 The Board shall make provision in its regulations for students with disabilities to earn a standard
107 diploma.

108 3. Provide, in the requirements to earn a standard or advanced studies diploma, the successful
109 completion of one virtual course. The virtual course may be a noncredit-bearing course.

110 4. Provide, in the requirements for the verified units of credit stipulated for obtaining the standard or
111 advanced studies diploma, that students completing elective classes into which the Standards of Learning
112 for any required course have been integrated may take the relevant Standards of Learning test for the
113 relevant required course and receive, upon achieving a satisfactory score on the specific Standards of
114 Learning assessment, a verified unit of credit for such elective class that shall be deemed to satisfy the
115 Board's requirement for verified credit for the required course.

116 5. Establish a procedure to facilitate the acceleration of students that allows qualified students, with
117 the recommendation of the division superintendent, without completing the 140-hour class, to obtain
118 credit for such class upon demonstration of mastery of the course content and objectives. Having
119 received credit for the course, the student shall be permitted to sit for the relevant Standards of Learning
120 assessment and, upon receiving a passing score, shall earn a verified credit. Nothing in this section shall

preclude relevant school division personnel from enforcing compulsory attendance in public schools.

6. Provide for the award of verified units of credit for passing scores on industry certifications, state licensure examinations, and national occupational competency assessments approved by the Board of Education.

School boards shall report annually to the Board of Education the number of Board-approved industry certifications obtained, state licensure examinations passed, national occupational competency assessments passed, Virginia workplace readiness skills assessments passed, and the number of career and technical education completers who graduated. These numbers shall be reported as separate categories on the School Performance Report Card.

For the purposes of this subdivision, "career and technical education completer" means a student who has met the requirements for a career and technical concentration or specialization and all requirements for high school graduation or an approved alternative education program.

In addition, the Board may:

a. For the purpose of awarding verified units of credit, approve the use of additional or substitute tests for the correlated Standards of Learning assessment, such as academic achievement tests, industry certifications or state licensure examinations; and

b. Permit students completing career and technical education programs designed to enable such students to pass such industry certification examinations or state licensure examinations to be awarded, upon obtaining satisfactory scores on such industry certification or licensure examinations, the appropriate verified units of credit for one or more career and technical education classes into which relevant Standards of Learning for various classes taught at the same level have been integrated. Such industry certification and state licensure examinations may cover relevant Standards of Learning for various required classes and may, at the discretion of the Board, address some Standards of Learning for several required classes.

7. Provide for the waiver of certain graduation requirements (i) upon the Board's initiative or (ii) at the request of a local school board. Such waivers shall be granted only for good cause and shall be considered on a case-by-case basis.

8. Consider all computer science course credits earned by students to be science course credits, mathematics course credits, or career and technical education credits. The Board of Education shall develop guidelines addressing how computer science courses can satisfy graduation requirements.

9. Award one standard unit of credit to and exempt from the requirement to receive instruction in economics education and financial literacy any student who demonstrates mastery of the subject by achieving a satisfactory score on an assessment developed or adopted by the Board.

E. In the exercise of its authority to recognize exemplary academic performance by providing for diploma seals, the Board of Education shall develop criteria for recognizing exemplary performance in career and technical education programs by students who have completed the requirements for a Board of Education-approved diploma and shall award seals on the diplomas of students meeting such criteria.

In addition, the Board shall establish criteria for awarding a diploma seal for advanced mathematics and technology for the Board of Education-approved diplomas. The Board shall consider including criteria for (i) technology courses; (ii) technical writing, reading, and oral communication skills; (iii) technology-related training; and (iv) industry, professional, and trade association national certifications.

The Board shall also establish criteria for awarding a diploma seal for excellence in civics education and understanding of our state and federal constitutions and the democratic model of government for the Board of Education-approved diplomas. The Board shall consider including criteria for (i) successful completion of history, government, and civics courses, including courses that incorporate character education; (ii) voluntary participation in community service or extracurricular activities that includes the types of activities that shall qualify as community service and the number of hours required; and (iii) related requirements as it deems appropriate.

F. The Board shall establish, by regulation, requirements for the award of a general achievement adult high school diploma for those persons who are not subject to the compulsory school attendance requirements of § 22.1-254 and have (i) achieved a passing score on a high school equivalency examination approved by the Board of Education; (ii) successfully completed an education and training program designated by the Board of Education; (iii) earned a Board of Education-approved career and technical education credential such as the successful completion of an industry certification, a state licensure examination, a national occupational competency assessment, or the Virginia workplace readiness skills assessment; and (iv) satisfied other requirements as may be established by the Board for the award of such diploma.

G. To ensure the uniform assessment of high school graduation rates, the Board shall collect, analyze, and report high school graduation and dropout data using a formula prescribed by the Board.

The Board may promulgate such regulations as may be necessary and appropriate for the collection, analysis, and reporting of such data.