

**REPORT FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE SUFFOLK CITY SCHOOL BOARD**

SENT VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

To: Heather S. Howell, Chair of the School Board
Sean P. McGee, Vice-Chair of the School Board
The Honorable Members of the School Board

From: Tyron D. Riddick, Chair Legislative Committee
Valerie b. Fields, Member of the Legislative Committee
Kimberly A. Slingluff, Member of the Legislative Committee

Re: 2025 House and Senate Bills

Date: February 10, 2025

The Legislative Committee of the Suffolk City School Board met on February 6, 2025 at 5:00 PM in the Administrative Offices of Suffolk Public Schools. The Legislative Committee submits the following report:

HOUSE BILLS
SUPPORTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

HB 1674

Institutions of higher education are required to have their professional education programs accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). This bill directs the Department of Education to provide an alternative to this requirement for any program that leads to endorsement in a school counselor program or school psychology program that has secured specialty area accreditation from a specialized accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education or the Council for Higher Education.

HB 1788

One of the measures for school performance will be attendance. This bill will allow unexpected excused absence for any length based on extenuating circumstances to be excluded from the calculation of chronic absenteeism under readiness component of the School Performance and Support Framework.

HB 1805

This bill will require any IEP meeting for a student with a disability that is held for the purpose of postsecondary transition planning must be consistent with guidance documents provided by the VDOE. Also, each institution of higher education must adopt a policy that when a student with a disability is enrolled or admitted to the institution,

presents evidence that will establish that the student is an individual with a disability, and in need of an accommodation under the ADA, the accommodation should be granted. If the need for the accommodation has not been properly documented, the institution of higher education will grant the student provisional or temporary accommodations so that additional documentation can be presented and considered.

HB 1806

For students with an IEP or 504 there must also be included protocols and supports for students during emergency situations and a step by step guide as to how to execute the emergency protocol.

HB 1824

Requires the Board of Education to permit any student to substitute an African American History course or the Advanced Placement African American Studies course for the Virginia and U.S. History course in order to satisfy the history and social studies credit requirement for high school graduation.

HB 1910

Prohibits public schools from offering any food to students that contains a color additive, as that term is defined in the bill.

HB 2103

Requires the Board of Education to amend its Regulation and allow teachers in the field of career and technical education, where the license calls for occupational work experience, to receive one year of teaching experience for each two years of work and may also receive one year of teaching experience for each one year of work experience.

HB 2158

Requires the Chief Information Officer for the Commonwealth to enter into an interagency agreement with the Dept. of Corrections to assist in the development of information technology strategic plans and preparation of budget requests for information technology to support the literacy and education programs at correctional facilities and to also include appropriate security protections. This bill also requires the Superintendent of the Department of Corrections to have a functional literacy program for inmates testing below at least the eighth grade and a secondary and adult education program for inmates testing between an eighth and twelfth grade level to prepare them for the high school equivalency examination. Also, for postsecondary education, a program that provides access to coursework sufficient to earn a Uniform Certificate of General Studies, an associate degree, postsecondary credentials, certifications, and licenses.

HB 2196

Establishes the Restorative Schools in Virginia Pilot Program. This program will be administered by the Dept. of Education to address school discipline issues and promote evidence-based restorative practices. Grants will be awarded to eligible schools in each superintendent region for developing and implementing a comprehensive plan to integrate restorative practices in schools.

HB 2226

Prohibits any school employee from disclosing address information to a noncustodial parent without first taking reasonable steps to determine whether the disclosure will jeopardize the safety of the student or the custodial parent.

HB 2237

Clarifies that when a school employee is suspended, the employee continues to be paid, regardless of the length of the suspension, until there is a hearing before the school board. The only exception is if the employee has been charged by summons, warrant, information, or indictment of a certain criminal offense, at which time the employee's salary can be placed in escrow.

HB 2278

Requires each school board or school superintendent to review the extent to which school buildings and grounds present physical accessibility challenges and barriers for individuals with disabilities that may prevent students from fully participating in school activities. Each local school board or school superintendent is to report their findings to the General Assembly by no later than November 1, 2025.

HB 2341

Requires the Department of Education to develop and provide each local school board with guidance on the adoption of policies governing the provision of culturally responsive and language appropriate mental health support services for students. Each local school board is to adopt such policies by January 1, 2026.

HB 2360

Requires Board of Education to include on its diploma a seal of biliteracy and will consider such a seal to be a high-demand industry workforce credential for the purpose of satisfying graduation requirements and this will also be used when determining and calculating high school student readiness in the school accountability system.

HB 2454

Directs the Board of Education to include as an indicator to measure high school postsecondary readiness the completion of work-based learning experiences.

HB 2455

Expands the scope of postsecondary credit and degree agreements by allowing any qualified high school student to earn an associate degree for which the credits will fully transfer to the student's preferred program of study at one or more baccalaureate public institutions of higher education.

HB 2460

Requires the Board of Education to consider including Digital Learning Integration Standards of Learning that will incorporate media literacy and digital citizenship standards. Digital citizenship means a diverse set of skills related to current technology

and social media, including norms of appropriate, responsible and healthy behavior. Media literacy means the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and use media information.

HB 2471

Requires the Department of Education to enter into one or more statewide contracts with providers of a platform for Medicaid billing for reimbursable services rendered at school sites that any school board may use at no cost to facilitate, track, and coordinate Medicaid billing.

HB 2538

Requires Department of Education to establish a funding formula for early childhood care and education services that establishes a minimum funding and number of slots per biennium for the support of early childcare and education services.

HB 2590

Directs the Department of Education to establish the Virginia Student Training Employment Pipeline for U.S. Procurement Grant Fund Program. The purpose of the grant will be to facilitate opportunities for students in the 11th or 12th grade at a public school, or at a community college, or historically black college in the Commonwealth, by entering into an agreement with an entity that agrees to provide assistance to the student so that the student can obtain any federal security clearance, training, or credential that is necessary for the student to be prepared for employment with the entity upon graduation. The student will accept and remain in the employment for an agreed-upon period of time after graduation.

HB 2601

Requires the Department of Education to establish uniform processes for the standardization of student attendance data, and the integration of the data into the Virginia Longitudinal Data System. With such funds as may be appropriated will provide funding and logistical support to local school divisions for the information technology improvements necessary for data standardization and integration, giving preference to rural school division that have greater need for assistance and to create a statewide dashboard providing real time data analytics for policymakers and educators.

HB 2606

Requires the Board of Education to amend its regulation related to due process hearings. A party may not have a due process hearing until that party or the attorney representing a party files a notice verifying that the complaint only includes claims that are substantially different from other claims actively being considered or decisions rendered from a previously filed due process hearing request for which all appeal procedures have been exhausted.

HB 2637

Directs the Department of Education to develop a mental health first aid training program consisting of an adult component and an adolescent and youth component.

HB 2640

Requires the Department of Education to develop and post on its official website guidelines and information regarding virtual or online learning. The guidelines are to include (1) statewide policies relating to virtual learning; (2) the availability of online learning options; and (3) guidelines for educators and schools relating to online or virtual learning.

HB 2679

Requires the division superintendent or his designee is to provide the student's parent or guardian with materials on the recognition of and strategies for responding to behavior that a student poses a threat of violence or physical harm to self or others. This bill also requires information that parents be provided with information relating to limiting a student's access to lethal means, including firearms and medications. The Board will also issue guidelines on the selection of materials.

HB 2686

Requires that each local school board to develop and adopt policies that sets forth criteria for students in grades five through eight to enroll in advanced or accelerated mathematics.

HB 2718

Provides that any photo speed monitoring device placed in a school crossing zone, the sworn certificate or facsimile will not be prima facie evidence of the facts contained in the certificate or facsimile unless the recorded images depict a portable sign or tilt-over sign that is in position or blinking sign that is activated indicating the school crossing zone at the time of the speeding violation.

HB 2720

Expands the availability of transportation services for students by allowing local school divisions to contract with privately owned companies for transporting pupils to and from school activities that are designed to carry 11 and 15 passengers provided: (1) the vehicle meets federal standards; (2) is a Type A, Type B, or Type C school bus as defined by Board regulations; or (3) designed for nine passengers or fewer. School Boards must hold at least one public hearing and adopt a resolution to utilize any alternate transportation specified in the bill.

HB 2765

Requires the Department of Education to develop or procure a multiplatform compatible mobile application that permits public school students to submit anonymous reports relating to the health and safety of self or others, including threats of violence that are made on social media. The bill also requires training of individuals to respond to anonymous reports in a timely and effective manner, including responding to the student and notifying school officials, and local law enforcement.

HB 2774

Requires each division superintendent or his designee to notify the parent of each student in the local school division of any school-connected overdose within 24 hours of learning of the overdose. The local school board will be required to adopt and implement a policy that implements this notice requirement. Also, reasonable steps must be taken to protect the privacy and dignity of individuals involved in any school-connected overdose.

HB 2777

The bill provides a definition for high-quality instructional materials and that the Board will adopt regulations governing the purchase of high-quality instructional materials approved by the Board for use by children attending public schools.

SENATE BILLS
SUPPORTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

SB 1104

Requires the Board of Education to distribute to each local school division guidelines on policies relating to extreme heat safety and protection for student-athletes.

SB 1124

Requires the Board of Education to permit each local school board to offer a program of driver education in the safe operation of motor vehicles as a computer-based driver education course for any student who is enrolled in an online or virtual physical or health education program.

SB 1146

Any person under 21 years of age in possession of a tobacco product on a school bus, on school property, or at a school sponsored activity will pay a civil penalty of \$25 for the first offense and for any subsequent offense within a single year there will be a fine of \$100.

SB 1244

This bill pertains to the enrollment of children whose parents are federal employees under orders and are transferring from a school in a foreign country to a school division in the Commonwealth. The bill changes the term "local education agency" to "education agency" and redefines the term "foreign country" and revises the term "sending state" to "sending state or foreign country."

SB 1320

Requires annual student physicals evaluate the student's family history for related cardiac conditions that will include, among other requirements, the American Heart Association's 14-point screening for heart disease in youth. The bill requires the Department of Education and the Department of Health to provide guidance cardiac screening for both public and private schools prior to any student participating in an athletic team or squad. The bill also requires that the Department of Education and Department of Health

establish a childhood cardiac screening professional development module to increase the assessment skills of health care providers completing these examinations.

SB 1377

Directs the Department of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, to develop an implement a plan that would incentives and facilitate participation in the Commonwealth Mental Health First Aid Program by public school staff and students. This Program provides training by certified trainers to help identify, understand, and respond to the signs of mental illness and substance abuse.

SB 1413

Establishes several enumerated requirements to ensure indoor air quality in public school buildings. The bill requires that someone be designated to ensure compliance. And the bill also requires that each school board accept and respond to complaints and maintain a record of all complaints and responses made to those complaints.

SB 1486

Requires in any contract executed between a school board and a school technology provider that it must include language that protects the release of student records and personal information by the school board or the school technology provider.

SB 1491

Expands the definition of "school crossing zones" to include areas surrounding schools where the presence of students reasonable requires a special warning to motorists.

HOUSE BILLS
OPPOSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

HB 2195

Directs the Board to establish licensing requirements for mold inspection and mold remediation.

SENATE BILLS
OPPOSED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

SB 738

This bill clarifies that violation of the cell phone policy alone cannot constitute sufficient cause to suspend or expel a student from school or for disruptive behavior authorizing a teacher to remove a student from class. If there is an instance of disruptive behavior it must be addressed in accordance with the codes of student conduct.

SB1030

No student is permitted to be a participant on or try out for any school athletic team or squad unless the student has submitted to the school principal a signed report from a licensed physician, licensed advanced practice registered nurse, or licensed physician assistant that within the preceding 14 months received a physical examination. Current law requires a physical within the preceding 12 months.

SB 1032

Removes the requirement that the local school board must provide notice of noncontinuation of a teacher's contract by June 15, but instead requires that the teacher give notice of noncontinuation of the contract by June 15 of each year.

SB 1437

Would allow any ensemble music class offered in grades six to be larger than 35 [which is currently found in SOQ Standard 2] and instead would allow the music class to have up to 45 students.

RECOMMENDATION

The Legislative Committee recommends that the Board adopts its positions supporting and opposing legislation listed above, and that a letter be sent from the Board to Delegate Nadarius E. Clark, Delegate Baxter N. Ennis, and Senator Emily M. Jordan asking that they support the School Board's legislative positions.