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HOUSE BILL NO. 386

Offered January 10, 2024

Prefiled January 8, 2024

A BILL to amend and reenact § 22.1-253.13:2, as it shall become effective, of the Code of Virginia, relating to public school staffing ratios; specialized student support positions.

Patrons—Hernandez, Anthony, Bennett-Parker, Callsen, Clark, Cohen, Cole, Convirs-Fowler, Feggans, Henson, Keys-Gamarra, Martinez, McClure, Rasoul, Shin, Simon, Simonds, Watts and Willett

Referred to Committee on Education

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 22.1-253.13:2, as it shall become effective, of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 22.1-253.13:2. (For Effective Date, see Acts 2022, cc. 549, 550, cl. 2) Standard 2. Instructional, administrative, and support personnel.

A. The Board shall establish requirements for the licensing of teachers, principals, superintendents, and other professional personnel.

B. School boards shall employ licensed instructional personnel qualified in the relevant subject areas.

C. Each school board shall assign licensed instructional personnel in a manner that produces divisionwide ratios of students in average daily membership to full-time equivalent teaching positions, excluding special education teachers, principals, assistant principals, school counselors or certain other licensed individuals as set forth in subdivision H 4, and librarians, that are not greater than the following ratios: (i) 24 to one in kindergarten with no class being larger than 29 students; if the average daily membership in any kindergarten class exceeds 24 pupils, a full-time teacher's aide shall be assigned to the class; (ii) 24 to one in grades one, two, and three with no class being larger than 30 students; (iii) 25 to one in grades four through six with no class being larger than 35 students; and (iv) 24 to one in English classes in grades six through 12. After September 30 of any school year, anytime the number of students in a class exceeds the class size limit established by this subsection, the local school division shall notify the parent of each student in such class of such fact no later than 10 days after the date on which the class exceeded the class size limit. Such notification shall state the reason that the class size exceeds the class size limit and describe the measures that the local school division will take to reduce the class size to comply with this subsection.

Within its regulations governing special education programs, the Board shall seek to set pupil/teacher ratios for pupils with intellectual disability that do not exceed the pupil/teacher ratios for self-contained classes for pupils with specific learning disabilities.

Further, school boards shall assign instructional personnel in a manner that produces schoolwide ratios of students in average daily memberships to full-time equivalent teaching positions of 21 to one in middle schools and high schools. School divisions shall provide all middle and high school teachers with one planning period per day or the equivalent, unencumbered of any teaching or supervisory duties.

D. Each local school board shall employ with state and local basic, special education, gifted, and career and technical education funds a minimum number of licensed, full-time equivalent instructional personnel for each 1,000 students in average daily membership (ADM) as set forth in the appropriation act.

E. In addition to the positions supported by basic aid and in support of regular school year programs of prevention, intervention, and remediation, state funding, pursuant to the appropriation act, shall be provided to fund certain full-time equivalent instructional positions for each 1,000 students in grades K through 12 who are identified as needing prevention, intervention, and remediation services. State funding for prevention, intervention, and remediation programs provided pursuant to this subsection and the appropriation act may be used to support programs for educationally at-risk students as identified by the local school boards.

To provide algebra readiness intervention services required by § 22.1-253.13:1, school divisions may employ mathematics teacher specialists to provide the required algebra readiness intervention services. School divisions using the Standards of Learning Algebra Readiness Initiative funding in this manner shall only employ instructional personnel licensed by the Board.

F. In addition to the positions supported by basic aid and those in support of regular school year programs of prevention, intervention, and remediation, state funding, pursuant to the general appropriation act, shall be provided to support (i) 18.5 full-time equivalent instructional positions in the 2020-2021 school year for each 1,000 students identified as having limited English proficiency and (ii) 20 full-time equivalent instructional positions in the 2021-2022 school year and thereafter for each 1,000 students identified as having limited English proficiency, which positions may include dual language teachers who provide instruction in English

58 and in a second language.

59 To provide flexibility in the instruction of English language learners who have limited English proficiency
60 and who are at risk of not meeting state accountability standards, school divisions may use state and local
61 funds from the Standards of Quality Prevention, Intervention, and Remediation account to employ additional
62 English language learner teachers or dual language teachers to provide instruction to identified limited
63 English proficiency students. Using these funds in this manner is intended to supplement the instructional
64 services provided in this section. School divisions using the SOQ Prevention, Intervention, and Remediation
65 funds in this manner shall employ only instructional personnel licensed by the Board.

66 G. In addition to the full-time equivalent positions required elsewhere in this section, each local school
67 board shall employ one reading specialist for each 550 students in kindergarten through grade five and one
68 reading specialist for each 1,100 students in grades six through eight. Each such reading specialist shall have
69 training in science-based reading research and evidence-based literacy instruction practices. In addition, each
70 such reading specialist shall have training in the identification of and the appropriate interventions,
71 accommodations, and teaching techniques for students with dyslexia or a related disorder and shall serve as
72 an advisor on dyslexia and related disorders. Such reading specialist shall have an understanding of the
73 definition of dyslexia and a working knowledge of (i) techniques to help a student on the continuum of skills
74 with dyslexia; (ii) dyslexia characteristics that may manifest at different ages and grade levels; (iii) the basic
75 foundation of the keys to reading, including multisensory, explicit, systemic, and structured reading
76 instruction; and (iv) appropriate interventions, accommodations, and assistive technology supports for
77 students with dyslexia.

78 To provide reading intervention services required by § 22.1-253.13:1, school divisions may employ
79 reading specialists to provide the required reading intervention services. School divisions using the Early
80 Reading Intervention Initiative funds in this manner shall employ only instructional personnel licensed by the
81 Board. Local school divisions that employ a sufficient number of reading specialists to meet this staffing
82 standard may assign reading specialists to grade levels according to grade levels with greatest need,
83 regardless of the individual staffing standards established for grades kindergarten through five and six
84 through eight.

85 H. Each local school board shall employ, at a minimum, the following full-time equivalent positions for
86 any school that reports fall membership, according to student enrollment:

87 1. Principals, one full-time in each elementary school, middle school, and high school, to be employed on
88 a 12-month basis;

89 2. Assistant principals in elementary schools, one half-time at 600 students, one full-time at 900 students;
90 assistant principals in middle schools, one full-time for each 600 students; assistant principals in high schools,
91 one full-time for each 600 students; and school divisions that employ a sufficient number of assistant
92 principals to meet this staffing requirement may assign assistant principals to schools within the division
93 according to the area of greatest need, regardless of whether such schools are elementary, middle, or
94 secondary;

95 3. Librarians in elementary schools, one part-time to 299 students, one full-time at 300 students; librarians
96 in middle schools, one-half time to 299 students, one full-time at 300 students, two full-time at 1,000
97 students; librarians in high schools, one half-time to 299 students, one full-time at 300 students, two full-time
98 at 1,000 students. Local school divisions that employ a sufficient number of librarians to meet this staffing
99 requirement may assign librarians to schools within the division according to the area of greatest need,
100 regardless of whether such schools are elementary, middle, or secondary; and

101 4. School counselors, one full-time equivalent position per 325 students in grades kindergarten through
102 12.

103 However, in order to meet the staffing requirements set forth in this subdivision, any local school board (i)
104 may employ, under a provisional license issued by the Department for three school years with an allowance
105 for an additional two-year extension with the approval of the division superintendent, any professional
106 counselor licensed by the Board of Counseling, clinical social worker licensed by the Board of Social Work,
107 psychologist licensed by the Board of Psychology, or other licensed counseling professional with appropriate
108 experience and training, provided that any such individual makes progress toward completing the
109 requirements for full licensure as a school counselor during such period of employment or (ii) in the event
110 that the school board does not receive any application from a licensed school counselor, professional
111 counselor, clinical social worker, or psychologist or another licensed counseling professional with
112 appropriate experience and training to fill a school counselor vacancy in the school division, may enter into
113 an annual contract with another entity for the provision of school counseling services by a licensed
114 professional counselor, clinical social worker, or psychologist or another licensed counseling professional
115 with appropriate experience and training. Local school boards that employ a sufficient number of individuals
116 to meet the staffing requirements set forth in this subdivision may assign such individuals to schools within
117 the division according to the area of greatest need, regardless of whether such schools are elementary, middle,
118 or high schools.

119 I. Local school boards shall employ five full-time equivalent positions per 1,000 students in grades

120 kindergarten through five to serve as elementary resource teachers in art, music, and physical education.

121 J. Local school boards shall employ two full-time equivalent positions per 1,000 students in grades
122 kindergarten through 12, one to provide technology support and one to serve as an instructional technology
123 resource teacher.

124 To provide flexibility, school divisions may use the state and local funds for instructional technology
125 resource teachers to employ a data coordinator position, an instructional technology resource teacher position,
126 or a data coordinator/instructional resource teacher blended position. The data coordinator position is
127 intended to serve as a resource to principals and classroom teachers in the area of data analysis and
128 interpretation for instructional and school improvement purposes, as well as for overall data management and
129 administration of state assessments. School divisions using these funds in this manner shall employ only
130 instructional personnel licensed by the Board.

131 K. Local school boards may employ additional positions that exceed these minimal staffing requirements.
132 These additional positions may include, but are not limited to, those funded through the state's incentive and
133 categorical programs as set forth in the appropriation act.

134 L. A combined school, such as kindergarten through 12, shall meet at all grade levels the staffing
135 requirements for the highest grade level in that school; this requirement shall apply to all staff, except for
136 school counselors or certain other licensed individuals as set forth in subdivision H 4, and shall be based on
137 the school's total enrollment. The Board may grant waivers from these staffing levels upon request from local
138 school boards seeking to implement experimental or innovative programs that are not consistent with these
139 staffing levels.

140 M. School boards shall, however, annually, on or before December 31, report to the public (i) the actual
141 pupil/teacher ratios in elementary school classrooms in the local school division by school for the current
142 school year; and (ii) the actual pupil/teacher ratios in middle school and high school in the local school
143 division by school for the current school year. Actual pupil/teacher ratios shall include only the teachers who
144 teach the grade and class on a full-time basis and shall exclude resource personnel. School boards shall report
145 pupil/teacher ratios that include resource teachers in the same annual report. Any classes funded through the
146 voluntary kindergarten through third grade class size reduction program shall be identified as such classes.
147 Any classes having waivers to exceed the requirements of this subsection shall also be identified. Schools
148 shall be identified; however, the data shall be compiled in a manner to ensure the confidentiality of all teacher
149 and pupil identities.

150 N. Students enrolled in a public school on a less than full-time basis shall be counted in ADM in the
151 relevant school division. Students who are either (i) enrolled in a nonpublic school or (ii) receiving home
152 instruction pursuant to § 22.1-254.1, and who are enrolled in public school on a less than full-time basis in
153 any mathematics, science, English, history, social science, career and technical education, fine arts, foreign
154 language, or health education or physical education course shall be counted in the ADM in the relevant
155 school division on a pro rata basis as provided in the appropriation act. Each such course enrollment by such
156 students shall be counted as 0.25 in the ADM; however, no such nonpublic or home school student shall be
157 counted as more than one-half a student for purposes of such pro rata calculation. Such calculation shall not
158 include enrollments of such students in any other public school courses.

159 O. Each school board shall provide at least ~~three~~ *four* specialized student support positions per 1,000
160 students. For purposes of this subsection, specialized student support positions include school social workers,
161 school psychologists, school nurses, licensed behavior analysts, licensed assistant behavior analysts, and
162 other licensed health and behavioral positions, which may either be employed by the school board or
163 provided through contracted services.

164 In order to fill vacant school psychologist positions, any local school board may employ, under a
165 provisional license issued by the Department for three school years with an allowance for an additional two-
166 year extension with the approval of the division superintendent, clinical psychologists licensed by the Board
167 of Psychology, provided that any such individual makes progress toward completing the requirements for full
168 licensure as a school psychologist during such period of employment.

169 P. Each local school board shall provide those support services that are necessary for the efficient and
170 cost-effective operation and maintenance of its public schools.

171 For the purposes of this title, unless the context otherwise requires, "support services positions" shall
172 include the following:

173 1. Executive policy and leadership positions, including school board members, superintendents and
174 assistant superintendents;

175 2. Fiscal and human resources positions, including fiscal and audit operations;

176 3. Student support positions, including (i) social work administrative positions not included in subsection
177 O; (ii) school counselor administrative positions not included in subdivision H 4; (iii) homebound
178 administrative positions supporting instruction; (iv) attendance support positions related to truancy and
179 dropout prevention; and (v) health and behavioral administrative positions not included in subsection O;

180 4. Instructional personnel support, including professional development positions and library and media

181 positions not included in subdivision H 3;
182 5. Technology professional positions not included in subsection J;
183 6. Operation and maintenance positions, including facilities; pupil transportation positions; operation and
184 maintenance professional and service positions; and security service, trade, and laborer positions;
185 7. Technical and clerical positions for fiscal and human resources, student support, instructional personnel
186 support, operation and maintenance, administration, and technology; and
187 8. School-based clerical personnel in elementary schools; part-time to 299 students, one full-time at 300
188 students; clerical personnel in middle schools; one full-time and one additional full-time for each 600
189 students beyond 200 students and one full-time for the library at 750 students; clerical personnel in high
190 schools; one full-time and one additional full-time for each 600 students beyond 200 students and one full-
191 time for the library at 750 students. Local school divisions that employ a sufficient number of school-based
192 clerical personnel to meet this staffing requirement may assign the clerical personnel to schools within the
193 division according to the area of greatest need, regardless of whether such schools are elementary, middle, or
194 secondary.
195 Pursuant to the appropriation act, support services shall be funded from basic school aid.
196 School divisions may use the state and local funds for support services to provide additional instructional
197 services.
198 Q. Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, when determining the assignment of instructional and
199 other licensed personnel in subsections C through J, a local school board shall not be required to include full-
200 time students of approved virtual school programs.