

25103847D

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1957**

Offered January 13, 2025

Prefiled January 6, 2025

*A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 2.2-3705.3 and 22.1-253.13:3 of the Code of Virginia, relating to Board of Education; Standards of Learning assessments and related student assessment methods; assessment development, implementation, and administration reform.*

Patrons—Helmer; Senator: VanValkenburg

Referred to Committee on Education

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

**1. That §§ 2.2-3705.3 and 22.1-253.13:3 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:**

**§ 2.2-3705.3. Exclusions to application of chapter; records relating to administrative investigations.**

The following information contained in a public record is excluded from the mandatory disclosure provisions of this chapter but may be disclosed by the custodian in his discretion, except where such disclosure is prohibited by law. Redaction of information excluded under this section from a public record shall be conducted in accordance with § 2.2-3704.01.

1. Information relating to investigations of applicants for licenses and permits, and of all licensees and permittees, made by or submitted to the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority, the Virginia Cannabis Control Authority, the Virginia Lottery pursuant to Chapter 40 (§ 58.1-4000 et seq.) and Chapter 41 (§ 58.1-4100 et seq.) of Title 58.1, the Virginia Racing Commission, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services relating to investigations and applications pursuant to Article 1.1:1 (§ 18.2-340.15 et seq.) of Chapter 8 of Title 18.2, or the Private Security Services Unit of the Department of Criminal Justice Services.

2. Records of active investigations being conducted by the Virginia Cannabis Control Authority or by the Department of Health Professions or any health regulatory board in the Commonwealth pursuant to § 54.1-108.

3. Investigator notes, and other correspondence and information, furnished in confidence with respect to an active investigation of individual employment discrimination complaints made to the Department of Human Resource Management, to such personnel of any local public body, including local school boards, as are responsible for conducting such investigations in confidence, or to any public institution of higher education. However, nothing in this subdivision shall prevent the disclosure of information taken from inactive reports in a form that does not reveal the identity of charging parties, persons supplying the information, or other individuals involved in the investigation.

4. Records of active investigations being conducted by the Department of Medical Assistance Services pursuant to Chapter 10 (§ 32.1-323 et seq.) of Title 32.1.

5. Investigative notes and other correspondence and information furnished in confidence with respect to an investigation or conciliation process involving an alleged unlawful discriminatory practice under the Virginia Human Rights Act (§ 2.2-3900 et seq.) or under any local ordinance adopted in accordance with the authority specified in § 2.2-524, or adopted pursuant to § 15.2-965, or adopted prior to July 1, 1987, in accordance with applicable law, relating to local human rights or human relations commissions. However, nothing in this subdivision shall prevent the distribution of information taken from inactive reports in a form that does not reveal the identity of the parties involved or other persons supplying information.

6. Information relating to studies and investigations by the Virginia Lottery of (i) lottery agents, (ii) lottery vendors, (iii) lottery crimes under §§ 58.1-4014 through 58.1-4018, (iv) defects in the law or regulations that cause abuses in the administration and operation of the lottery and any evasions of such provisions, or (v) the use of the lottery as a subterfuge for organized crime and illegal gambling where such information has not been publicly released, published or copyrighted. All studies and investigations referred to under clauses (iii), (iv), and (v) shall be open to inspection and copying upon completion of the study or investigation.

7. Investigative notes, correspondence and information furnished in confidence, and records otherwise exempted by this chapter or any Virginia statute, provided to or produced by or for (i) the Auditor of Public Accounts; (ii) the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission; (iii) an appropriate authority as defined in § 2.2-3010 with respect to an allegation of wrongdoing or abuse under the Fraud and Abuse Whistle Blower Protection Act (§ 2.2-3009 et seq.); (iv) the Office of the State Inspector General with respect to an investigation initiated through the Fraud, Waste and Abuse Hotline or an investigation initiated pursuant to Chapter 3.2 (§ 2.2-307 et seq.); (v) internal auditors appointed by the head of a state agency or by any public institution of higher education; (vi) the committee or the auditor with respect to an investigation or audit conducted pursuant to § 15.2-825; (vii) the auditors, appointed by the local governing body of any county,

59 city, or town or a school board, who by charter, ordinance, or statute have responsibility for conducting an  
60 investigation of any officer, department, or program of such body; or (viii) the Behavioral Health  
61 Commission. Information contained in completed investigations shall be disclosed in a form that does not  
62 reveal the identity of the complainants or persons supplying information to investigators. Unless disclosure is  
63 excluded by this subdivision, the information disclosed shall include the agency involved, the identity of the  
64 person who is the subject of the complaint, the nature of the complaint, and the actions taken to resolve the  
65 complaint. If an investigation does not lead to corrective action, the identity of the person who is the subject  
66 of the complaint may be released only with the consent of the subject person. Local governing bodies shall  
67 adopt guidelines to govern the disclosure required by this subdivision.

68 8. The names and personal contact information of complainants furnished in confidence with respect to an  
69 investigation of individual zoning enforcement complaints or complaints relating to the Uniform Statewide  
70 Building Code (§ 36-97 et seq.) or the Statewide Fire Prevention Code (§ 27-94 et seq.) made to a local  
71 governing body. As used in this subdivision, "personal contact information" includes the complainant's home  
72 or business (i) address, (ii) email address, or (iii) telephone number or comparable number assigned to any  
73 other electronic communication device.

74 9. Records of active investigations being conducted by the Department of Criminal Justice Services  
75 pursuant to Article 4 (§ 9.1-138 et seq.), Article 4.1 (§ 9.1-150.1 et seq.), Article 11 (§ 9.1-185 et seq.), and  
76 Article 12 (§ 9.1-186 et seq.) of Chapter 1 of Title 9.1.

77 10. Information furnished to or prepared by the Board of Education pursuant to subsection ~~D~~ F of §  
78 22.1-253.13:3 in connection with the review or investigation of any alleged breach in security, unauthorized  
79 alteration, or improper administration of tests by local school board employees responsible for the  
80 distribution or administration of the tests. However, this section shall not prohibit the disclosure of such  
81 information to (i) a local school board or division superintendent for the purpose of permitting such board or  
82 superintendent to consider or to take personnel action with regard to an employee or (ii) any requester, after  
83 the conclusion of a review or investigation, in a form that (a) does not reveal the identity of any person  
84 making a complaint or supplying information to the Board on a confidential basis and (b) does not  
85 compromise the security of any test mandated by the Board.

86 11. Information contained in (i) an application for licensure or renewal of a license for teachers and other  
87 school personnel, including transcripts or other documents submitted in support of an application, and (ii) an  
88 active investigation conducted by or for the Board of Education related to the denial, suspension,  
89 cancellation, revocation, or reinstatement of teacher and other school personnel licenses including  
90 investigator notes and other correspondence and information, furnished in confidence with respect to such  
91 investigation. However, this subdivision shall not prohibit the disclosure of such (a) application information  
92 to the applicant at his own expense or (b) investigation information to a local school board or division  
93 superintendent for the purpose of permitting such board or superintendent to consider or to take personnel  
94 action with regard to an employee. Information contained in completed investigations shall be disclosed in a  
95 form that does not reveal the identity of any complainant or person supplying information to investigators.  
96 The completed investigation information disclosed shall include information regarding the school or facility  
97 involved, the identity of the person who was the subject of the complaint, the nature of the complaint, and the  
98 actions taken to resolve the complaint. If an investigation fails to support a complaint or does not lead to  
99 corrective action, the identity of the person who was the subject of the complaint may be released only with  
100 the consent of the subject person. No personally identifiable information regarding a current or former  
101 student shall be released except as permitted by state or federal law.

102 12. Information provided in confidence and related to an investigation by the Attorney General under  
103 Article 1 (§ 3.2-4200 et seq.) or Article 3 (§ 3.2-4204 et seq.) of Chapter 42 of Title 3.2, Article 10 (§  
104 18.2-246.6 et seq.) of Chapter 6 or Chapter 13 (§ 18.2-512 et seq.) of Title 18.2, or Article 1 (§ 58.1-1000) of  
105 Chapter 10 of Title 58.1. However, information related to an investigation that has been inactive for more  
106 than six months shall, upon request, be disclosed provided such disclosure is not otherwise prohibited by law  
107 and does not reveal the identity of charging parties, complainants, persons supplying information, witnesses,  
108 or other individuals involved in the investigation.

109 13. Records of active investigations being conducted by the Department of Behavioral Health and  
110 Developmental Services pursuant to Chapter 4 (§ 37.2-400 et seq.) of Title 37.2.

111 **§ 22.1-253.13:3. Standard 3. Accreditation, other standards, assessments, and releases from state**  
112 **regulations.**

113 A. The Board shall promulgate regulations establishing standards for accreditation pursuant to the  
114 Administrative Process Act (§ 2.2-4000 et seq.), which shall include (i) student outcome and growth  
115 measures, (ii) requirements and guidelines for instructional programs and for the integration of educational  
116 technology into such instructional programs, (iii) administrative and instructional staffing levels and  
117 positions, including staff positions for supporting educational technology, (iv) student services, (v) auxiliary  
118 education programs such as library and media services, (vi) requirements for graduation from high school,  
119 (vii) community relations, and (viii) the philosophy, goals, and objectives of public education in the

120 Commonwealth.

121 The Board shall promulgate regulations establishing standards for accreditation of public virtual schools  
122 under the authority of the local school board that enroll students full time.

123 The Board's regulations establishing standards for accreditation shall ensure that the accreditation process  
124 is transparent and based on objective measurements and that any appeal of the accreditation status of a school  
125 is heard and decided by the Board.

126 The Board shall review annually the accreditation status of all schools in the Commonwealth. The Board  
127 shall review the accreditation status of a school once every three years if the school has been fully accredited  
128 for three consecutive years. Upon such triennial review, the Board shall review the accreditation status of the  
129 school for each individual year within that triennial review period. If the Board finds that the school would  
130 have been accredited every year of that triennial review period the Board shall accredit the school for another  
131 three years. The Board may review the accreditation status of any other school once every two years or once  
132 every three years, provided that any school that receives a multiyear accreditation status other than full  
133 accreditation shall be covered by a Board-approved multiyear corrective action plan for the duration of the  
134 period of accreditation. Such multiyear corrective action plan shall include annual written progress updates to  
135 the Board. A multiyear accreditation status shall not relieve any school or division of annual reporting  
136 requirements.

137 Each local school board shall maintain schools that are fully accredited pursuant to the standards for  
138 accreditation as prescribed by the Board. Each local school board shall report the accreditation status of all  
139 schools in the local school division annually in public session.

140 The Board shall establish a review process to assist any school that does not meet the standards  
141 established by the Board. The relevant school board shall report the results of such review and any annual  
142 progress reports in public session and shall implement any actions identified through such review and utilize  
143 them for improvement planning.

144 The Board shall establish a corrective action plan process for any school that does not meet the standards  
145 established by the Board. Such process shall require (a) each school board to submit a corrective action plan  
146 for any school in the local school division that does not meet the standards established by the Board and (b)  
147 any school board that fails to demonstrate progress in developing or implementing any such corrective action  
148 plan to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Board.

149 When the Board determines through its review process that the failure of schools within a division to meet  
150 the standards established by the Board is related to division-level failure to implement the Standards of  
151 Quality or other division-level action or inaction, the Board may require a division-level academic review.  
152 After the conduct of such review and within the time specified by the Board, each school board shall enter  
153 into a memorandum of understanding with the Board and shall subsequently submit to the Board for approval  
154 a corrective action plan, consistent with criteria established by the Board setting forth specific actions and a  
155 schedule designed to ensure that schools within its school division meet the standards established by the  
156 Board. If the Board determines that the proposed corrective action plan is not sufficient to enable all schools  
157 within the division to meet the standards established by the Board, the Board may return the plan to the local  
158 school board with directions to submit an amended plan pursuant to Board guidance. Such corrective action  
159 plans shall be part of the relevant school division's comprehensive plan pursuant to § 22.1-253.13:6.

160 B. The Superintendent shall develop, subject to revision by the Board, criteria for determining and  
161 recognizing educational performance in the Commonwealth's local school divisions and public schools. The  
162 portion of such criteria that measures individual student growth shall become an integral part of the  
163 accreditation process for schools in which any grade level in the grade three through eight range is taught.  
164 The Superintendent shall annually report to the Board on the accreditation status of all school divisions and  
165 schools. Such report shall include an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of public education programs  
166 in the various school divisions in Virginia and recommendations to the General Assembly for further  
167 enhancing student learning uniformly across the Commonwealth. In recognizing educational performance  
168 and individual student growth in the school divisions, the Board shall include consideration of special school  
169 division accomplishments, such as numbers of dual enrollments and students in Advanced Placement and  
170 International Baccalaureate courses, and participation in academic year Governor's Schools.

171 The Superintendent shall assist local school boards in the implementation of action plans for increasing  
172 educational performance and individual student growth in those school divisions and schools that are  
173 identified as not meeting the approved criteria. The Superintendent shall monitor the implementation of and  
174 report to the Board on the effectiveness of the corrective actions taken to improve the educational  
175 performance in such school divisions and schools.

176 C. With such funds as are available for this purpose, the Board shall prescribe assessment methods to  
177 determine the level of achievement of the Standards of Learning objectives by all students *in grades three*  
178 *through 12*. Such assessments shall evaluate knowledge, application of knowledge, critical thinking, and  
179 skills related to the Standards of Learning being assessed. ~~The~~ *In prescribing such assessment methods, the*  
180 *Board shall, with:*

181 1. *With the assistance of independent testing experts, conduct a regular analysis and validation process for*

182 these assessments- ~~It~~;

183 2. *In lieu of a one-time end-of-year assessment, the Board shall establish, for the purpose of providing*  
184 *measures of individual student growth over the course of the school year, a through-year growth assessment*  
185 *system, aligned with the Standards of Learning, for the administration of reading and mathematics*  
186 *assessments in grades three through eight. Such through-year growth assessment system shall include at least*  
187 *one beginning-of-year, one mid-year, and one end-of-year assessment in order to provide individual student*  
188 *growth scores over the course of the school year, but the total time scheduled for taking all such assessments*  
189 *shall not exceed 150 percent of the time scheduled for taking a single end-of-year proficiency assessment.*  
190 *The Department shall ensure adequate training for teachers and principals on how to interpret and use student*  
191 *growth data from such assessments to improve reading and mathematics instruction in grades three through*  
192 *eight throughout the school year. With such funds and content as are available for such purpose, such*  
193 *through-year growth assessment system shall provide accurate measurement of a student's performance,*  
194 *through computer adaptive technology, using test items at, below, and above the student's grade level as*  
195 *necessary-*

196 ~~The Board shall also provide;~~

197 3. *Provide the option of industry certification and state licensure examinations as a student-selected credit-*

198 ~~The Department shall make;~~

199 4. *Make available to school divisions (i) Standards of Learning assessments typically administered by*  
200 *high schools by December 1 of the school year in which such assessments are to be administered or when*  
201 *newly developed assessments are available, whichever is later-*

202 ~~The Board shall make, and (ii) each Standards of Learning assessment for each subject area administered~~  
203 ~~the previous school year, including the applicable answer key or grading rubric for each such assessment, by~~  
204 ~~the beginning of the current school year for the purpose of ensuring that such assessments are available to~~  
205 ~~each teacher for use as practice assessments for students;~~

206 5. *Make publicly available such assessments in a timely manner and as soon as practicable following the*  
207 *administration of such tests, so long as the release of such assessments does not compromise test security or*  
208 *deplete the bank of assessment questions necessary to construct subsequent tests, or limit the ability to test*  
209 *students on demand and provide immediate results in the web-based assessment system-*

210 ~~The Board shall prescribe;~~

211 6. *Prescribe alternative methods of Standards of Learning assessment administration for children with*  
212 *disabilities, as that term is defined in § 22.1-213, who meet criteria established by the Board to demonstrate*  
213 *achievement of the Standards of Learning. An eligible student's Individual Education Program team shall*  
214 *make the final determination as to whether an alternative method of administration is appropriate for the*  
215 *student;*

216 7. *To assess the educational progress of students, (i) develop appropriate assessments, which may include*  
217 *criterion-referenced tests and other assessment instruments that may be used by classroom teachers; (ii)*  
218 *select appropriate industry certification and state licensure examinations; and (iii) prescribe and provide*  
219 *measures, which may include nationally normed tests to be used to identify students who score in the bottom*  
220 *quartile at selected grade levels;*

221 8. *Not include in its calculation of the passage rate for a Standards of Learning assessment or the level of*  
222 *achievement of the Standards of Learning objectives for an individual student growth assessment for the*  
223 *purposes of state accountability any student whose parent has decided to not have his child take such*  
224 *Standards of Learning assessment, unless such exclusions would result in the school's not meeting any*  
225 *required state or federal participation rate;*

226 9. *Permit any teacher providing instruction in a Standards of Learning subject area who scores any such*  
227 *Standards of Learning assessments to earn professional development points toward renewal of his license for*  
228 *his time spent scoring such assessments;*

229 10. *Require each assessment, including each Standards of Learning assessment administered as a part of*  
230 *the through-year growth assessment system established pursuant to subdivision 2, each mandatory local*  
231 *alternative assessment implemented by a school board pursuant to subdivision E 1 a (2), and each permissive*  
232 *local alternative assessment administered by a school board pursuant to subdivision E 3 b, to be scored on a*  
233 *100-point scale in accordance with statewide scoring rubrics;*

234 11. *Make available to each student and his parents within 45 days of any state assessment window closing*  
235 *for any such assessment administration an individualized student score report for each such assessment,*  
236 *developed in accordance with the Board's guidelines, that shall include, at a minimum: (i) a description of*  
237 *the applicable assessment; (ii) individualized data on such student's assessment performance; (iii) a*  
238 *comparison of such student's performance on such assessment with the performance of the student's school,*  
239 *school division, and the Commonwealth; and (iv) guidance to assist the student and his parents in*  
240 *interpreting such student's assessment results; and*

241 12. *Publicly release the statewide Standards of Learning assessment results and any associated data no*  
242 *later than the date on which individual Standards of Learning assessment scores for the applicable*

243 assessment administration period are released to individual students and parents.

244 For any period during which the Standards of Learning contents or assessments in a specific content area  
 245 are being revised or phased in, the Board may adopt special provisions related to the administration and use  
 246 of any Standards of Learning test or tests in such content area as applied to accreditation ratings for such  
 247 period. Prior to statewide administration of such tests, the Board shall provide notice to local school boards  
 248 regarding such special provisions. The Department shall develop processes for informing school divisions of  
 249 changes in the Standards of Learning requirements, including any revisions to Standards of Learning  
 250 contents or assessments.

251 D. The Board shall include in the student outcome and growth measures that are required by the standards  
 252 of accreditation the required assessments for various grade levels and classes, including the completion of the  
 253 mandatory local alternative assessments implemented by each local school board pursuant to subdivision E 1  
 254 a (2), in accordance with the Standards of Learning. These assessments shall include end-of-course or  
 255 end-of-grade tests for English, mathematics, science, and history and social science and may be integrated to  
 256 include multiple subject areas.

257 The Standards of Learning assessments administered to students E. All assessment methods prescribed by  
 258 the Board to determine the level of achievement of the Standards of Learning objectives, pursuant to  
 259 subsections C and D, shall be developed, implemented, and administered in accordance with the following:

260 1. The assessments administered to students in grades three through eight, except for those students with  
 261 disabilities, as that term is defined in § 22.1-213, who participate in an alternative assessment pursuant to  
 262 subdivision C 6, shall not:

263 a. Consist of:

264 (1) Standards of Learning assessments, including end-of-year assessments administered as part of the  
 265 through-year growth assessment system established pursuant to subdivision C 2. The Standards of Learning  
 266 assessments shall not exceed (i) reading and mathematics in grades three and four; (ii) reading, mathematics,  
 267 and science in grade five; (iii) reading and mathematics in grades six and seven; (iv) reading, writing, and  
 268 mathematics in grade eight; (v) science after the student receives instruction in the grade six science, life  
 269 science, and physical science Standards of Learning and before the student completes grade eight; and (vi)  
 270 Virginia Studies and Civics and Economics once each at the grade levels deemed appropriate by each local  
 271 school board. The reading and mathematics assessments administered to students in grades three through  
 272 eight shall be through-year growth assessments pursuant to subdivision C 2.

273 ~~Each~~ The Department shall award recovery credit to any student in grades three through eight who  
 274 performs below grade level on a Standards of Learning assessment in English reading or mathematics,  
 275 receives remediation, and subsequently retakes and performs at or above grade level on such an assessment,  
 276 including any such student who subsequently retakes such an assessment on an expedited basis; and

277 (2) Local alternative assessments, including any permissive local alternative assessments administered in  
 278 accordance with subdivision 3 b and mandatory local alternative assessments administered by each school  
 279 board in each Standards of Learning subject area in which a Standards of Learning assessment is not  
 280 available for administration during the school year. Each school board shall annually certify that it has  
 281 provided instruction and administered an each mandatory local alternative assessment, consistent with Board  
 282 guidelines, to students in grades three through eight in each Standards of Learning subject area in which a  
 283 Standards of Learning assessment was not administered during the school year in accordance with this  
 284 subdivision and Board guidelines. Such guidelines shall ~~(a)~~ (i) incorporate options for age-appropriate,  
 285 authentic performance assessments and portfolios with rubrics and other methodologies designed to ensure  
 286 that students are making adequate academic progress in the subject area and that the Standards of Learning  
 287 content is being taught; ~~(b)~~ (ii) permit and encourage integrated assessments that include multiple subject  
 288 areas; and ~~(c)~~ (iii) establish criteria for mandatory local alternative assessments, including the core content,  
 289 concepts, and skills that shall be prioritized on each such assessment and specific parameters for any  
 290 performance assessment administered by a school board in accordance with this subdivision, relating to the  
 291 structure and format of and content and items that shall be included in such assessments; (iv) include a  
 292 comprehensive grading rubric for each mandatory local alternative assessment that (a) clearly defines  
 293 student performance objectives and achievement targets, (b) provides scoring criteria that emphasizes  
 294 student performance and subject-matter proficiency, and (c) for any performance assessment, includes  
 295 criteria and student performance objectives designed to emphasize a student's performance and  
 296 subject-matter proficiency as demonstrated through completion of the tested tasks in ways that are authentic  
 297 to the academic discipline; and (v) emphasize collaboration between teachers to administer and substantiate  
 298 the assessments and the professional development of teachers to enable them to make the best use of  
 299 mandatory local alternative assessments.

300 ~~Local~~ The Board shall perform an annual audit of a certain percentage, as determined by the Board, of  
 301 such mandatory local alternative assessments administered by school boards for the purpose of ensuring  
 302 such assessments are consistent with Board guidelines and ensuring the quality and rigor of such  
 303 assessments are consistent across school divisions and years;

304 b. With such funds as may be appropriated for such purpose, except as provided in subdivision C 6, be

305 *developed consistent with Board guidelines and in accordance with subdivision 4; and*  
306 *c. Be used to identify students who show deficiencies or a need for academic support in a specific subject*  
307 *area or skill for the purpose of ensuring such students receive appropriate remediation or intervention. Local*  
308 *school divisions shall provide targeted mathematics remediation and intervention to students in grades six*  
309 *through eight who show computational deficiencies as demonstrated by their individual performance on any*  
310 *diagnostic test or grade-level Standards of Learning mathematics test that measures non-calculator*  
311 *computational skills.*

312 *The Department shall award recovery credit to any student in grades three through eight who performs*  
313 *below grade level on a Standards of Learning assessment in English reading or mathematics, receives*  
314 *remediation, and subsequently retakes and performs at or above grade level on such an assessment, including*  
315 *any such student who subsequently retakes such an assessment on an expedited basis.*

316 *In addition, to assess the educational progress of students, the Board shall (1) develop appropriate*  
317 *assessments, which may include criterion-referenced tests and other assessment instruments that may be used*  
318 *by classroom teachers; (2) select appropriate industry certification and state licensure examinations; and (3)*  
319 *prescribe and provide measures, which may include nationally normed tests to be used to identify students*  
320 *who score in the bottom quartile at selected grade level.*

321 *The Standards of Learning requirements, including all related assessments, shall be waived for.*

322 *2. The assessments administered to students in grades nine through 12, except for those students with*  
323 *disabilities, as that term is defined in § 22.1-213, who participate in an alternative assessment pursuant to*  
324 *subdivision C 6:*

325 *a. Shall consist, for each student, of only the end-of-course Standards of Learning assessments necessary*  
326 *to meet federal accountability requirements established by the federal Elementary and Secondary Education*  
327 *Act of 1965, P.L. 89-10, as amended, and to meet Virginia high school graduation requirements. For the*  
328 *purposes of this subdivision, any student who receives a passing score on a permissive local alternative*  
329 *assessment administered pursuant to subdivision 3 b in lieu of any end-of-course Standards of Learning*  
330 *assessment corresponding to any graduation requirement shall be deemed to meet the applicable graduation*  
331 *requirement; and*

332 *b. With such funds as may be appropriated for such purpose, except as provided in subdivision C 6, be*  
333 *developed consistent with Board guidelines and in accordance with the provisions of subdivision 4.*

334 *3. Any end-of-course Standards of Learning assessment administered to students in grades three through*  
335 *12, except for those students with disabilities, as that term is defined in § 22.1-213, who participate in an*  
336 *alternative assessment pursuant to subdivision C 6, shall be subject to the following requirements:*

337 *a. A school board may, but need not, elect to administer any available end-of-course Standards of*  
338 *Learning assessment in a specific Standards of Learning subject area to students in a specific grade level the*  
339 *administration of which is (i) not necessary to meet federal accountability requirements established by the*  
340 *federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, P.L. 89-10, as amended, and (ii) is not required by*  
341 *the provisions of subdivisions E 1 or E 2 or by any other applicable state law or regulation. However, any*  
342 *school board that elects to administer such an end-of-course Standards of Learning assessment pursuant to*  
343 *this subdivision shall be required to administer such assessment to each student receiving instruction in that*  
344 *subject area at that grade level;*

345 *b. Any school board may, but need not, administer a permissive local alternative assessment in a specific*  
346 *subject area to students in a specific grade level in lieu of any end-of-course Standards of Learning*  
347 *assessment the administration of which is not necessary to meet federal accountability requirements*  
348 *established by the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, P.L. 89-10, as amended, but*  
349 *which may be required in that subject area and at that grade level pursuant to state law or regulation. Any*  
350 *school board, in order to administer a permissive local alternative assessment, shall (i) submit to the Board*  
351 *by July 31 of each year for which it plans on administering a permissive local alternative assessment notice*  
352 *of its intent to administer such permissive local alternative assessment, including an acknowledgement that*  
353 *such permissive local alternative assessment may be selected for a random audit as a part of the annual*  
354 *Board audit required pursuant to this subdivision and that failure of such audit shall result in an additional*  
355 *audit of any such permissive local alternative assessment administered by the school board the succeeding*  
356 *school year, the failure of which shall result in such school board being prohibited from administering a*  
357 *permissive local alternative assessment for the next four years and (ii) after administering such permissive*  
358 *local alternative assessment, annually certify to the Board that it has provided instruction in the applicable*  
359 *Standards of Learning subject area and developed and administered the permissive local alternative*  
360 *assessment in accordance with this subdivision and Board guidelines. The Board shall perform an annual*  
361 *audit of a certain percentage, as determined by the Board, of such permissive local alternative assessments*  
362 *administered by any school board for the purpose of ensuring such assessments are developed and*  
363 *administered in accordance with this subdivision and Board guidelines and ensuring the quality and rigor of*  
364 *such assessments are consistent across school divisions and years. Failure of the Board audit for any*  
365 *permissive local alternative assessment shall have no impact on the grade or credits earned in the applicable*

366 subject area or course by any student to whom such permissive local alternative assessment. Any permissive  
 367 local alternative assessment administered by a school board, regardless of whether it is selected for and fails  
 368 a Board audit, shall for each student to whom it was administered be scored, weighted and factored into each  
 369 student's grade, and, if applicable, result in the award of the same amount and type of verified credits as any  
 370 other end-of-course assessment administered in that subject area and at that grade level;

371 c. Any such Standards of Learning assessment or permissive local alternative assessment permitted  
 372 pursuant to subdivision b or, if any such assessment consists of more than one part, each of which has a  
 373 separate administration period, the final part of any such end-of-course assessment shall be administered no  
 374 earlier than two weeks prior to the last day of the school year. No additional end-of-course assessment shall  
 375 be administered for any such Standards of Learning subject area. Each student's score on any such  
 376 assessment shall account for at least 10 percent of the student's final grade in such course; and

377 d. Any student who performs below grade level on any such Standards of Learning assessment or any  
 378 permissive local alternative assessment administered pursuant to subdivision b, shall be eligible to retake  
 379 such assessment, provided that (i) no student may retake an assessment after June 30 of the calendar year in  
 380 which the applicable assessment was administered, unless the school board of the school in which the student  
 381 is enrolled grants such student permission to retake such assessment at a later date; (ii) any student who,  
 382 pursuant to applicable Board regulations, is eligible for an expedited retake of an assessment shall retake  
 383 such assessment within two weeks of the date on which scoring was completed for such student's assessment,  
 384 unless it is determined that additional time is necessary in order for such student to complete the  
 385 comprehensive remediation program required to establish eligibility for an expedited retake in accordance  
 386 with Board regulations; and (iii) the score any student receives on any assessment retake shall not replace  
 387 the initial score the student received on the assessment taken during the regular assessment administration  
 388 period for the purpose of calculating the student's final grade in the course in accordance with subdivision c.

389 4. Any assessment administered to students in grades three through 12, except for those students with  
 390 disabilities, as that term is defined in § 22.1-213, who participate in an alternative assessment pursuant to  
 391 subdivision C 6, shall be subject to the following requirements:

392 a. Any assessment shall, with such funds as may be appropriated for such purpose, include (i) items that  
 393 require the student to apply knowledge, critical thinking skills, and logic in preparing a response, including  
 394 open-ended questions and long-form writing, and other tasks, as appropriate for the applicable subject, and  
 395 (ii) different items and questions on each assessment administered during the same school year and in the  
 396 same grade and Standards of Learning subject area such that such students are not tested on the same items  
 397 or questions on one assessment as they were on a previous assessment administered during that school year  
 398 in that grade or subject area;

399 b. Any multiple choice questions included as a part of (i) any such assessment shall be representative of  
 400 the Standards of Learning objectives and content for the applicable subject area for the school year; (ii) any  
 401 end-of-course Standards of Learning assessment or permissive local alternative assessment administered  
 402 pursuant to subdivision 3 b shall be narrowly tailored to test students only on the most significant content for  
 403 the applicable subject area, in accordance with the Board's guidelines; and (iii) any performance assessment  
 404 administered as a part of a mandatory local alternative assessment in accordance with subdivision 1 a (2) or  
 405 otherwise administered as the final performance assessment for that course or school year shall consist of no  
 406 more than 40 thematic questions focused on the broad, overarching themes and topics of the applicable  
 407 subject area and shall either be developed in accordance with or selected from the multiple choice question  
 408 test bank developed by the Board; and

409 c. For the purpose of maximizing instructional time, the frequency of assessment administration for any  
 410 assessment administered pursuant to the provisions of this section, including any Standards of Learning  
 411 assessment, mandatory local alternative assessment administered in accordance with subdivision 1 a (2),  
 412 permissive local alternative assessment administered in accordance with subdivision 3 b, or performance  
 413 assessment administered as a part of any school board's mandatory local alternative assessment plan, or any  
 414 combination thereof, for each Standards of Learning subject area in a single school year shall not exceed one  
 415 such assessment per academic quarter, or a total of four assessments per year.

416 5. For any student awarded a scholarship under the Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Program,  
 417 pursuant to § 30-231.2, who is enrolled in a preparation program for a high school equivalency examination  
 418 approved by the Board or in an adult basic education program or an adult secondary education program to  
 419 obtain the high school diploma or a high school equivalency certificate-

420 The Department shall develop processes for informing school divisions of changes in the Standards of  
 421 Learning-

422 The Board may adopt special provisions related to the administration and use of any Standards of  
 423 Learning test or tests in a content area as applied to accreditation ratings for any period during which the  
 424 Standards of Learning content or assessments in that area are being revised and phased in. Prior to statewide  
 425 administration of such tests, the Board shall provide notice to local school boards regarding such special  
 426 provision. The Board shall not include in its calculation of the passage rate for a Standards of Learning

427 assessment or the level of achievement of the Standards of Learning objectives for an individual student  
428 growth assessment for the purposes of state accountability any student whose parent has decided to not have  
429 his child take such Standards of Learning assessment, unless such exclusions would result in the school's not  
430 meeting any required state or federal participation rate, *the Standards of Learning requirements, including all*  
431 *related assessments, shall be waived.*

432 ~~D. F.~~ The Board may pursue all available civil remedies pursuant to § 22.1-19.1 or administrative action  
433 pursuant to § 22.1-292.1 for breaches in test security and unauthorized alteration of test materials or test  
434 results.

435 The Board may initiate or cause to be initiated a review or investigation of any alleged breach in security,  
436 unauthorized alteration, or improper administration of tests, including the exclusion of students from testing  
437 who are required to be assessed, by local school board employees responsible for the distribution or  
438 administration of the tests.

439 Records and other information furnished to or prepared by the Board during the conduct of a review or  
440 investigation may be withheld pursuant to subdivision 10 of § 2.2-3705.3. However, this section shall not  
441 prohibit the disclosure of records to (i) a local school board or division superintendent for the purpose of  
442 permitting such board or superintendent to consider or to take personnel action with regard to an employee or  
443 (ii) any requester, after the conclusion of a review or investigation, in a form that (a) does not reveal the  
444 identity of any person making a complaint or supplying information to the Board on a confidential basis and  
445 (b) does not compromise the security of any test mandated by the Board. Any local school board or division  
446 superintendent receiving such records or other information shall, upon taking personnel action against a  
447 relevant employee, place copies of such records or information relating to the specific employee in such  
448 person's personnel file.

449 Notwithstanding any other provision of state law, no test or examination authorized by this section,  
450 including the Standards of Learning assessments, shall be released or required to be released as minimum  
451 competency tests, if, in the judgment of the Board, such release would breach the security of such test or  
452 examination or deplete the bank of questions necessary to construct future secure tests.

453 ~~E. G.~~ With such funds as may be appropriated, the Board may provide, through an agreement with  
454 vendors having the technical capacity and expertise to provide computerized tests and assessments, and test  
455 construction, analysis, and security, for (i) web-based computerized tests and assessments, including  
456 computer-adaptive Standards of Learning assessments, for the evaluation of student progress during and after  
457 remediation and (ii) the development of a remediation item bank directly related to the Standards of Learning.

458 ~~F. H.~~ To assess the educational progress of students as individuals and as groups, each local school board  
459 shall require the use of Standards of Learning assessments, alternative assessments, and other relevant data,  
460 such as industry certification and state licensure examinations, to evaluate student progress and to determine  
461 educational performance. Each local school *board* shall require the administration of appropriate assessments  
462 to students, which may include criterion-referenced tests and teacher-made tests and shall include the  
463 Standards of Learning assessments, the local school board's alternative assessments, and the National  
464 Assessment of Educational Progress state-by-state assessment. Each school board shall provide teachers,  
465 parents, principals, and other school leaders with their students' results on any Standards of Learning  
466 assessment or Virginia Alternate Assessment Program assessment as soon as practicable after the assessment  
467 is administered. Each school board shall analyze and report annually, in compliance with any criteria that  
468 may be established by the Board, the results from industry certification examinations and the Standards of  
469 Learning assessments to the public.

470 The Board shall include requirements for the reporting of the Standards of Learning assessment data,  
471 regardless of accreditation frequency, as part of the Board's requirements relating to the School Performance  
472 Report Card. Such scores shall be disaggregated for each school by student subgroups on the Virginia  
473 assessment program as appropriate and shall be reported to the public within three months of their receipt.  
474 These reports (i) shall be posted on the portion of the Department's website relating to the School  
475 Performance Report Card, in a format and in a manner that allows year-to-year comparisons, and (ii) may  
476 include the National Assessment of Educational Progress state-by-state assessment.

477 ~~G. I.~~ Each local school division superintendent shall regularly review the division's submission of data and  
478 reports required by state and federal law and regulations to ensure that all information is accurate and  
479 submitted in a timely fashion. The Superintendent shall provide a list of the required reports and data to  
480 division superintendents annually. The status of compliance with this requirement shall be included in the  
481 Board's annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly as required by § 22.1-18.

482 ~~H. J.~~ Any school board may request the Board for release from state regulations or, on behalf of one or  
483 more of its schools, for approval of an Individual School Accreditation Plan for the evaluation of the  
484 performance of one or more of its schools as authorized for certain other schools by the Standards for  
485 Accreditation pursuant to 8VAC20-131-280 C of the Virginia Administrative Code. Waivers of regulatory  
486 requirements may be granted by the Board based on submission of a request from the division superintendent  
487 and chairman of the local school board. The Board may grant, for a period up to five years, a waiver of



488 regulatory requirements that are not (i) mandated by state or federal law or (ii) designed to promote health or  
 489 safety. The school board shall provide in its waiver request a description of how the releases from state  
 490 regulations are designed to increase the quality of instruction and improve the achievement of students in the  
 491 affected school or schools. The Department shall provide (a) guidance to any local school division that  
 492 requests releases from state regulations and (b) information about opportunities to form partnerships with  
 493 other agencies or entities to any local school division in which the school or schools granted releases from  
 494 state regulations have demonstrated improvement in the quality of instruction and the achievement of  
 495 students.

496 The Board may also grant local school boards waivers of specific requirements in § 22.1-253.13:2, based  
 497 on submission of a request from the division superintendent and chairman of the local school board,  
 498 permitting the local school board to assign instructional personnel to the schools with the greatest needs, so  
 499 long as the school division employs a sufficient number of personnel divisionwide to meet the total number  
 500 required by § 22.1-253.13:2 and all pupil/teacher ratios and class size maximums set forth in subsection C of  
 501 § 22.1-253.13:2 are met. The school board shall provide in its request a description of how the waivers from  
 502 specific Standards of Quality staffing standards are designed to increase the quality of instruction and  
 503 improve the achievement of students in the affected school or schools. The waivers may be renewed in up to  
 504 five-year increments, or revoked, based on student achievement results in the affected school or schools.

505 *K. As used in this section:*

506 *"End-of-course Standards of Learning assessment" means any end-of-course, end-of-grade, or*  
 507 *end-of-year Standards of Learning assessment or any Standards of Learning assessment administered at the*  
 508 *conclusion of a course, grade, or school year.*

509 *"Local alternative assessment" means an assessment developed, administered, and scored by a local*  
 510 *school board, consistent with Board guidelines, that is aligned with the Standards of Learning for any*  
 511 *Standards of Learning subject area for which a Standards of Learning assessment is not administered by*  
 512 *such school board or is not administered on a statewide basis. "Local alternative assessment" includes any*  
 513 *mandatory local alternative assessment and any permissive local alternative assessment.*

514 *"Mandatory local alternative assessment" means any local alternative assessment that each local school*  
 515 *board is required to develop, administer, and score, consistent with Board guidelines, for any Standards of*  
 516 *Learning subject area in which a Standards of Learning assessment is not currently available or*  
 517 *administered on a statewide basis. "Mandatory local alternative assessment" includes any performance*  
 518 *assessment implemented by a local school board as a part of its local alternative assessment plan in*  
 519 *accordance with Department guidelines.*

520 *"Performance assessment" means an assessment developed and administered consistent with Board*  
 521 *guidelines and scored using a set rubric or set of criteria, that is designed to measure subject-matter*  
 522 *proficiency by requiring students to demonstrate learning acquisition and apply content, skills, and processes*  
 523 *in the applicable subject area through performing a task or creating a project. "Performance assessment"*  
 524 *includes any authentic performance assessment.*

525 *"Permissive local alternative assessment" means any local alternative assessment that a local school*  
 526 *board may, consistent with Board guidelines and in accordance with the provisions of this section, develop,*  
 527 *administer, and score in lieu of any Standards of Learning assessment that is otherwise administered on a*  
 528 *statewide basis but the administration of which is not necessary to meet federal accountability requirements.*

529 *"Standards of Learning assessment" means those criterion-referenced assessments approved by the Board*  
 530 *that measure attainment of knowledge and skills required by the Standards of Learning. "Standards of*  
 531 *Learning assessment" includes any end-of-course standards of learning assessment.*

532 **2. That the provisions of (i) subdivision C 4 of § 22.1-253.13:3 of the Code of Virginia, as amended by**  
 533 **this act, requiring the Board of Education to make available to all school division each Standards of**  
 534 **Learning assessment and the applicable answer key or grading rubric administered the previous school**  
 535 **year; (ii) subdivision C 11 of § 22.1-253.13:3 of the Code of Virginia, as amended by this act, relating to**  
 536 **the provision of an individualized student score report for each Standards of Learning assessment**  
 537 **completed by a student during any one state assessment window; and (iii) subdivisions 1 a (2), 3 b, 4 a,**  
 538 **and 4 b of subsection D of § 22.1-253.13:3 of the Code of Virginia, as amended by this act, relating to**  
 539 **(a) the implementation, administration, and auditing of mandatory and permissive local alternative**  
 540 **assessments and (b) the development of and requirements for the content, structure, format, and**  
 541 **scoring of Standards of Learning, local alternative, and performance assessments, shall be fully**  
 542 **implemented by the 2030–2031 school year.**

543 **3. That the Board of Education (the Board) shall amend its guidelines for school boards on the**  
 544 **administration of local alternative assessments in accordance with subsection E of § 22.1-253.13:3 of**  
 545 **the Code of Virginia, as amended by this act, to distinguish between mandatory local alternative**  
 546 **assessments and permissive local alternative assessments, as those terms are defined in subsection K of**  
 547 **§ 22.1-253.13:3 of the Code of Virginia, as amended by this act, and establish criteria and parameters**  
 548 **for the development and administration of such local alternative assessments, as that term includes any**

549 performance assessment administered by a school board as a part of any such mandatory local  
550 alternative assessment. Such guidelines shall establish (i) criteria and parameters for the development  
551 and administration of mandatory local alternative assessments, including (a) criteria for the core  
552 content, concepts, and skills that a mandatory local alternative assessment shall measure in each  
553 Standards of Learning subject area for which the administration of a mandatory local alternative  
554 assessment is required; (b) clear parameters relating to the content, structure, and format of such  
555 assessments, including requiring any assessment items that require students to provide written  
556 responses, such as long-form writing and open-ended questions, to test on broad, overarching concepts,  
557 themes, and ideas central to the subject area on which the assessment is testing; and (c) clear criteria  
558 and parameters specifically for any performance assessment administered as a part of any mandatory  
559 local alternative assessment and (ii) criteria and parameters for the development and administration of  
560 permissive local alternative assessments, including (a) the process and procedures by which each local  
561 school board shall submit to the Board notice of its intent to administer a permissive local alternative  
562 assessment, pursuant to subdivision E 3 b of § 22.1-253.13:3 of the Code of Virginia, as amended by  
563 this act, including the required form and content of such notice; (b) policies and procedures for  
564 conducting the annual random audit of permissive local alternative assessments, including the  
565 percentage of such assessments it shall audit each year; and (c) criteria for the development and  
566 administration of a permissive local alternative assessment for each Standards of Learning subject  
567 area in which such permissive local alternative assessment may be administered, including criteria for  
568 the core content, concepts, and skills that shall be prioritized on each such assessment in order to  
569 ensure that such permissive local alternative assessment is aligned with the applicable Standards of  
570 Learning objectives and that the rigor and quality of such permissive local alternative assessment is  
571 consistent with the corresponding end-of-course Standards of Learning assessment administered on a  
572 statewide basis. The Board shall make such amended guidelines available to each school board by the  
573 beginning of the 2026–2027 school year.

574 4. That the Board of Education (the Board), in collaboration with the Department of Education (the  
575 Department), shall, in working toward complete implementation of this act, (i) develop or modify  
576 statewide scoring rubrics for each assessment administered in accordance with the provisions of this  
577 act such that each such assessment shall be scored on a 100-point scale in accordance with subdivision  
578 C 10 of § 22.1-253.13:3 of the Code of Virginia, as amended by this act; (ii) develop a template and  
579 guidelines for individualized student score reports in accordance with the provisions of subdivision C  
580 11 of § 22.1-253.13:3 of the Code of Virginia, as amended by this act; (iii) develop and publish in a  
581 publicly accessible location on the Department's website guidelines on multiple choice questions  
582 included as a part of any end-of-course Standards of Learning assessment explicitly clarifying the  
583 content areas in each Standards of Learning subject area on which such multiple choice questions shall  
584 test students in accordance with subdivision E 4 b of § 22.1-253.13:3 of the Code of Virginia, as  
585 amended by this act; and (iv) develop and make available to each school board a Multiple Choice  
586 Question Assessment Bank consistent with the requirements for multiple choice questions included on  
587 performance assessments set forth in subdivision E 4 b of § 22.1-253.13:3 of the Code of Virginia, as  
588 amended by this act, to be used in developing and selecting multiple choice questions for use in  
589 performance assessments. The Board shall make such statewide scoring rubrics and individualized  
590 student score report materials available to each school board by the beginning of the 2030–2031 school  
591 year.

592 5. That the Board of Education shall promulgate regulations relating to secure assessment scoring  
593 processes and procedures designed to protect the security and integrity of the assessment scoring  
594 process, individual student scoring data, or other assessment data or information the release of which  
595 could compromise the integrity of such assessment administration or the administration of future  
596 assessments.

597 6. That the Department of Education, in collaboration with the Board of Education, shall develop a  
598 plan for the implementation of the provisions of this act no later than the beginning of the 2030-2031  
599 school year. In developing such plan, the Department of Education shall consider (i) a timeline for  
600 implementation of the new assessment items and reforms set forth in this act; (ii) approaches to  
601 implementing the new assessment items and reforms set forth in this act, including guidance on  
602 approaches to grading such items; (iii) appropriate pilot implementation of such assessment items  
603 prior to the 2028–2029 school year as necessary to determine the efficacy, propriety, and adequacy of  
604 such items; (iv) development of a bank of vetted sample assessment items set forth in this act that shall  
605 be comprehensive of skills being assessed and made available to each local school division by the  
606 beginning of the 2028–2029 school year; and (v) legislative and regulatory changes and funding  
607 necessary to implement any alternative approaches that may be considered pursuant to clause (ii). The  
608 Department of Education shall submit its initial plan to the Chairs of the Senate Committee on  
609 Education and Health, the House Committee on Education, the Senate Committee on Finance and

610 Appropriations, and the House Committee on Appropriations no later than November 1, 2025, and  
611 provide updates on the implementation of such plan by November 1 of each year thereafter through  
612 2030.

**INTRODUCED**

HB1957