

1 SENATE BILL NO. 147

2 AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

3 (Proposed by the Senate Committee on Education and Health

4 on _____)

5 (Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Pekarsky)

6 *A BILL to direct the Board of Education to develop alternative graduation pathways to earn a standard*
7 *diploma; report.*8 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**9 *1. § 1. The Board of Education shall develop alternative graduation pathways to earn the Standard Diploma*
10 *that expand opportunities to complete the verified credit requirements for the Standard Diploma that do not*
11 *require achieving a passing score on applicable Standards of Learning assessments. In developing such*
12 *alternative graduation pathways, the Board shall:*13 *1. Consult with and integrate the perspectives of a broad range of relevant stakeholders, including public*
14 *school educators, division superintendents, school boards, school principals, school counselors, parents of*
15 *public school students, student representatives, major education association representatives, and such other*
16 *stakeholders as the Board deems necessary;*17 *2. Consider alignment of any alternative pathways with the competencies articulated in the Profile of a*
18 *Virginia Graduate: critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, collaboration, and citizenship;*19 *3. Consider the following elements for incorporation into any such alternative pathways: (i)*
20 *nonassessment demonstrations of competence that allow students to demonstrate mastery of academic and*
21 *career skills without relying solely on standardized assessments, including capstone projects, portfolios,*
22 *locally developed performance assessments, completion of work-based learning experiences, completion of*
23 *dual-enrollment courses, service-learning opportunities, and attainment of industry-recognized credentials;*
24 *(ii) alternative assessments that could be used in lieu of or alongside Standards of Learning assessments to*
25 *earn verified credits, such as nationally normed tests or other assessments as may be approved by the Board;*
26 *and (iii) other pathway structures or elements designed to encourage hands-on learning and civic*
27 *engagement, including career and technical education sequences, apprenticeships, early college experiences,*
28 *or community service projects;*29 *4. Ensure that no alternative pathway developed in accordance with this act would, if implemented,*
30 *impact or replace the current requirements for earning a Standard Diploma or an Advanced Studies*
31 *Diploma;*32 *5. Ensure that at least one pathway is developed that includes a nonassessment demonstration of*

33 *competence as a means to earn verified credit, in lieu of receiving a passing score on the applicable*
34 *Standards of Learning Assessment. In doing so, the Board may expand the definition of verified credit as may*
35 *be necessary to include completion of such Board-approved nonassessment demonstration, provided that*
36 *such demonstration meets the rigorous standards established by the Board; and*

37 *6. Consider next steps for approval and implementation of the pathways developed pursuant to this act,*
38 *including potential timelines for implementation and the school year for which any such alternative*
39 *graduation pathways shall first apply to students entering grade nine.*

40 *The Board shall submit to the Governor and the Chairs of the House Committee on Education and the*
41 *Senate Committee on Education and Health by January 1, 2027, a report (i) detailing the progress made*
42 *toward developing the alternative graduation pathways to earn a Standard Diploma, pursuant to this act,*
43 *including a detailed description of the specific alternative graduation pathways developed; (ii) summarizing*
44 *the stakeholder engagement process and the perspectives received from stakeholders, in accordance with*
45 *subdivision 1; and (iii) outlining the next steps and potential timeline for approval and implementation of the*
46 *alternative graduation pathways to earn a Standard Diploma developed by the Board pursuant to this act,*
47 *considered by the Board in accordance with subdivision 6.*