

2009 General Assembly Update



Fairfax County Public Schools
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The 2009 General Assembly convened its 46-day session on January 14. At the conclusion of the first day, 1,796 bills had been filed. This number will increase as the final day for filing bills and joint resolutions is not until January 23.

The following bills are on the agenda for the first meeting of the House Education Committee:

HB 1679 Child abuse and neglect data; school board applicants (Orrock) would clarify that a local school board must take reasonable steps to determine whether an applicant, who has resided in another state within the last five years, was the subject of a founded case of child abuse and neglect in the relevant state by contacting such state's central child abuse and neglect registry, so long as such state provides access to out-of-state entities.

HB 1746 Family life education; adds value and benefits of marriage to be covered in curricula (Pogge) would add the value and benefits of marriage for men, women, children, and communities to the list of topics to be covered in family life education curricula.

HB 1789 Family life education; instruction on all topics must be both medically accurate & age appropriate (Hull) would provide that family life education instruction on all topics must be both medically accurate and age appropriate.

HJ 651 Project Lead the Way (PLTW) program; school divisions to launch in division's high schools (Cosgrove) would encourage the school divisions of the Commonwealth to consider launching a Project Lead the Way program in the division's high schools.

HJ 652 K-8 Mathematics Specialists; school divisions to hire to improve performance of students (Cosgrove) would encourage the school divisions of the Commonwealth to consider using existing intervention, remediation, and at-risk funding to hire K-8 Mathematics Specialists as an effective means to improve the performance of low-achieving students.

The following bills are on the agenda for the first meeting of the Senate's Public Education Subcommittee:

SB 827 Family life education; value and benefits of marriage for men, etc. to list of topics covered (Smith) would add the value and benefits of marriage for men, women, children, and communities to the list of topics to be covered in family life education curricula.

SB 956 Autism Tuition Assistance Grant Program; established (O'Bannon) would establish a tuition assistance grant program for students with autism. The program would provide grants of no more than \$20,000 a year per student to a Virginia nonsectarian private school of choice for students identified as autistic and for whom individual education plans have been written. The bill would require that in order to receive the grant the following conditions be satisfied: (i) the student has attended a public school in the Commonwealth and has received special education services for at least one year prior to the receipt of the grant; (ii) the parent has obtained acceptance for admission of the student to an eligible private school; (iii) the parent has executed and submitted to the division superintendent a written statement acknowledging that the public school has implemented an individualized educational program that is reasonably calculated to provide educational benefit; and (iv) the parent has requested the grant of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and notified the division superintendent of that request.

The following bills are on the agenda for the first meeting of the House's Students and Daycare Subcommittee:

H.B. 1624 Bullying, harassment, etc.; provides specific information for Bd. of Education in its model policy (Englin) would provide specific information for the Board of Education to include in its model policy on bullying, harassment, and intimidation. It would also provide a comprehensive definition of "bullying, harassment, or intimidation."

H.B. 1794 Suspensions; sufficient cause necessary to suspend student cannot rest solely on tardiness, etc. (Brink) would provide that the sufficient cause necessary to suspend a student cannot rest solely on instances of tardiness or truancy.

H.B. 1942 Single-sex education; clarifies manner school boards may establish program in school division (Peace) would clarify the manner in which school boards may establish a single-sex class, program, or school in a school division. Participation would be voluntary and the school division would have to provide a substantially equal coeducational school, class, or program.

H.B. 1980 Family life education; right of parents to review certain materials (McClellan) would require school divisions to include a detailed statement in the summary already required by law to be issued to parents and guardians to assist them in understanding the family life education program implemented in the school division, if the curriculum of the program offers only abstinence education. The statement must disclose that (i) the child is receiving abstinence-only education, (ii) the program does not conform to the Virginia Board of Education Guidelines for Family Life Education, (iii) parents and guardians have the right to review all written and audiovisual educational materials used in the program, and (iv) parents and guardians have the right to remove the child from all or part of family life education instruction.