

THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Special Subcommittee on HB 2395

The first meeting of the Special Subcommittee looked at other states and how they incorporate (or don't incorporate) home school students into their academic and extracurricular programs. Based upon this information, there are several options the subcommittee may wish to consider, outlined below.

I. The Virginia High School League could choose to amend its rules to allow home school students to participate, under parameters they develop.

II. The subcommittee could recommend legislation requiring schools to allow home school students to participate, provided they meet some modified version of "take five, pass five." This could include proof of grades in correspondence courses or online programs approved by the Board of Education, or standardized tests approved by the Board of Education. Currently, the Board has criteria for approving online courses and programs. There may be existing providers who could meet these criteria, but who haven't sought Board approval because they are not interested in contracting with a local school division.

III. The subcommittee could recommend legislation requiring schools to allow all home school students to participate, as long as they are meeting existing requirements for home school instruction. In this case, the subcommittee would need to decide who would be responsible for certifying the eligibility of such students. Someone at the state level? The superintendent? The principal? VHSL? Certain protections against abuse could be added, such as banning a student who leaves public school from participation for a certain time period, and specifying that students would only be eligible to participate at the school they would otherwise attend.

IV. The subcommittee could recommend legislation allowing home school students to participate at the discretion of the local school division, or even the principal. This option might appeal to those sympathetic to students in rural areas, where public school sports are the only practical option. In order to ensure some amount of consistency, the legislation could specify what would be required of home school students in order to be eligible, using either option II or III above.