

Student Support Agencies ForKids[✓]

Summary:

This bill establishes **§ 22.1-289.02** in the Virginia Code to establish, define, and govern Student Support Agencies (SSA) to expand resources for homeless and unstably housed children and to promote public/private collaboration to improve the educational outcomes of Virginia's children.

The expanding housing crisis is having a measurable, negative impact on homeless and unstably housed children. Over 40% of children identified as homeless under the Federal McKinney-Vento Act are chronically absent in Virginia. Chronic absenteeism is directly linked to reduced academic performance and lower scores on standardized tests and is a strong indicator for dropping out of school.

The bill requires SSAs to register with the Virginia Department of Education and comply with strict standards for handling personal student information. The Department of Education is tasked to maintain a registry of agencies, develop security guidelines, and monitor compliance. The bill mandates:

- Protection of student personal data through privacy policies, security measures, and a prohibition against targeted advertising or unauthorized profiling.
- Secure data exchange between schools and SSAs under memorandums of understanding (MOUs), with a standardized format provided by the Department of Education.
- Parental or student (over the age of 18) consent before data sharing.
- Accountability for data breaches and clear procedures for notifying affected individuals.

	All Students		Economically Disadvantaged		Homeless	
	2018-2019	2024-2025	2018-2019	2024-2025	2018-2019	2024-2025
Chesapeake	6.9%	11.1%	11.8%	19.6%	33.6%	49.1%
Norfolk	15.3%	17.9%	19.9%	23.2%	42.7%	39.7%
Portsmouth	16.0%	14.8%	19.9%	18.0%	43.9%	34.4%
Suffolk	9.4%	17.6%	14.5%	26.2%	38.2%	50.0%
Virginia Beach	9.4%	10.1%	13.9%	16.0%	32.0%	41.1%
Virginia	10.6%	14.8%	16.3%	21.9%	34.0%	43.4%

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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Justification:

The bill aims to enhance collaboration between Public Schools and qualified nonprofit organizations that provide housing and academic support to children experiencing homelessness and housing instability. Many organizations across the state, particularly those funded by the State and Federal Government, are already required to maintain high standards for confidentiality and data security. By enhancing collaboration between nonprofit services providers and Public Schools, this bill will optimize the use of community resources and eliminate barriers to serving Virginia's most at-risk children. Key benefits include:

1. **Efficiency & Collaboration:** Streamlining data exchange through secure channels and standardized MOUs ensures that critical issues like attendance and remediation can be addressed more swiftly, reducing delays in providing student support.
2. **Data Privacy & Security:** By establishing robust safeguards for student personal information and requiring MOUs between agencies and schools, the bill protects against misuse and unauthorized disclosures.
3. **Accountability:** A formal registry with compliance monitoring and enforcement ensures agencies adhere to high standards, while penalties for violations deter negligent practices.
4. **Consistency Across Schools:** Uniform consent forms and data-sharing guidelines reduce variability between school divisions, creating a cohesive framework for collaboration.
5. **Closing Education Gaps:** Expanding timely services to students experiencing homelessness and housing instability will reduce absenteeism, improve student outcomes and ensure students meet grade level milestones.

Who can read on grade level after 3rd grade?

