

Dear members of the School Board, Dr. Duran, Ms. Smith, Dr. Ottley, Mr. Marku, Ms. Graves, Dr. Sampson, and Dr. Devaney:

The executive board of the CCPTA would like to call your attention to the continued challenges that schools are having with complying with VA Code 22.1-6.1, which requires each school board to make menstrual supplies (pads or tampons) available in an accessible location at each school, and in particular, in the bathrooms at middle and high schools.

(<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-6.1/>) We are receiving reports from our PTAs that school counseling personnel are requesting that PTAs run donation drives to obtain such supplies because they are not otherwise available when accidents happen. School counselors should not be placed in the position to plead for donations of supplies that a school is required to supply by law.

Please note that the law applies the requirement to the school board, which may make it appropriate for the school board to adopt a policy addressing how it will comply (I do not see a policy already adopted). It will be important for such a policy (and/or its PIP) to ensure that such supplies are not just theoretically accessible, but that there are consistent checks done to make sure supplies are restocked, dispensers are functioning, personnel are informed where the supplies are kept at elementary schools, etc. It may also be important to consider menstrual supplies as part of the supplies planning factor for purposes of building out the budget.

Aside from the legal angle, this is also an equity issue where half of the student population has greater needs for basic hygiene supplies, AND low-income students are the most challenged by missing supplies. According to the "State of the Period 2021" (<https://period.org/uploads/State-of-the-Period-2021.pdf>), "The new data show period poverty—the inability to access menstrual hygiene products—has jumped to nearly a quarter of all students (up from 1 in 5 in 2019), and lower income and students of color have been particularly affected."

Finally, a quote from the bill sponsor, Sen. Jennifer Boysko, captures some of the emotional distress encountered by our youngest students when they don't have products readily accessible: "I can remember being a preteen and being horrified when I got my period in fifth grade," she said. "Having products available in the bathroom relieves that embarrassment."

Thank you for your prompt attention to this issue. A two year delay on implementation since the law passed is too long to wait.

Best,
Claire Noakes