COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
BOARD OF EDUCATION
RETREAT

MINUTES

The Board of Education convened at 9 a.m., Wednesday, October 22, 2014, at the Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia, with the following members present:

Mr. Christian N. Braunlich, President   Dr. Billy K. Cannaday, Jr.
Mrs. Winsome E. Sears, Vice President   Mr. James H. Dillard
Dr. Oktay Baysal   Mrs. Darla Edwards
Mrs. Diane T. Atkinson   Mrs. Joan E. Wodiska

Dr. Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

PARTICIPANTS

- Dr. Kristen Amundson, Executive Director, National Association of State School Boards of Education (NASBE)
- Mrs. Kirsten Taylor Carr, Program Director, Accountability, Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)
- Dr. Sharon Harsh, Appalachian Regional Comprehensive Center (ARCC)
- Dr. Sharron Morrissey, Vice Chancellor for Academic Services and Research, Virginia Community College System (VCCS)
- Dr. Joseph De Filippo, Director of Academic Affairs, State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV)
- Dr. Cynthia Cave, Assistant Superintendent for Policy and Communications, Virginia Department of Education (DOE)
- Mrs. Shelley Loving-Ryder, Assistant Superintendent for Student Assessment and School Improvement, Virginia Department of Education (DOE)
- Mr. Kent Dickey, Deputy Superintendent, Finance and Operations, Virginia Department of Education (DOE)
- Mrs. Patty Pitts, Assistant Superintendent for Teacher Education and Licensure, Virginia Department of Education (DOE)

WELCOME

Mr. Braunlich welcomed attendees and thanked DOE staff for their assistance in preparing for the retreat. Mr. Braunlich thanked Dr. Kris Amundson and Dr. Sharon Harsh for their support and participation.

Mr. Braunlich discussed the purpose of the retreat. He noted that the Board has authority with regards to the *Standards of Accreditation*, and the goal of the retreat is to understand the history and context of Virginia's accreditation and accountability system, examine accreditation

from the national perspective, and begin discussions about Virginia's accreditation system moving forward. He asked Board members to think about accreditation from a blank slate and consider ideas such as growth, measures other than student outcomes, and if accreditation needs to be on an annual basis. He noted that discussions at this retreat will inform the Board's retreat in April 2015.

HISTORY AND CONTEXT OF VIRGINIA ACCOUNTABILITY

Dr. Staples and Mrs. Loving-Ryder presented an overview of the history of accountability in Virginia. Their presentation is available online at:
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/2014/work_session/10_oct/history_and_context_of_virginias_accountability_system.pdf.

The discussion included:
- The amount of time given to school divisions to meet new standards.
- The timeline for revisions to *Standards of Learning*.
- The need for institutions of higher education to be part of the discussion regarding standards for college-readiness.

COHERENT SYSTEMS OF ACCOUNTABILITY FOR NEXT GENERATION LEARNING

Mrs. Carr presented an overview of what is happening around the country with regard to accountability systems. Her presentation is available online at:
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/2014/work_session/10_oct/ccsso_virginia_presentation.pdf.

The discussion included the need for the business community, institutions of higher education, and k-12 stakeholders to be part of the discussion on accountability and college and career-readiness.

VIRGINIA'S STANDARDS OF ACCREDITATION – WHERE WE ARE AND HOW WE GOT HERE

Dr. Cave presented the history of the *Standards of Accreditation* from 1994 to present. Her presentation is available online at:
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/2014/work_session/10_oct/soa_presentation.pdf.

The discussion included:
- Many students need remediation in mathematics in college because they complete their mathematics course requirements well before graduation.
- The DOE, SCHEV, and VCCS developed documents that describe college and career ready expectations in mathematics and English. These documents are available online at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/college_career_readiness/.
- The rationale for moving away from clock hours gives students and schools more flexibility if students demonstrate mastery of the course.
- Concerns were expressed regarding capacity for technology and broadband needs.

- Consideration of adding language about principal and superintendent evaluations, similar to language included for teachers.
- The importance of strengthening capacity of school divisions.
- Mrs. Pitts noted that educator evaluations must be consistent with the standards, but the Board's guidelines are not mandated.
- The importance of professional development and consideration as to whether or not it should be included in the Standards of Accreditation. Mrs. Atkinson noted that it is funded by the *Standards of Quality* (SOQ).
- The feasibility of the proposed appeal process, given that the process was proposed before approximately 500 schools lack full accreditation.

RECAP OF MORNING SESSION

Dr. Harsh recapped the morning session by linking various sections of the presentations to build a composite framework.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Rather than break into small group discussions, Board members decided to participate in discussion as a committee of the whole. The discussion included:

- What does college and career ready mean? Dr. De Filippo and Dr. Morrissey provided descriptions from the higher education perspective, including the ability to perform college-level work in reading, writing, thinking and performing in quantitative discipline. They noted that the expectations are different for different institutions of higher education. Dr. De Filippo also referenced the college and career ready expectations in mathematics and English (http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/college_career_readiness/). Dr. Morrissey noted that the discussion should include how to measure student readiness – what assessments are used?
- Pathways to college – it was noted that these pathways should start in high school.
- The suggestion to separate the definition of college and career ready.
- What should students have? "grit" which includes motivation, persistence, attendance, frequency of turning in assignments, etc.; self-motivation; soft skills and dispositions to prepare students for life; ability to access and use sources to create rationale positions; ability to collaborate in a group as a leader or participant; ability to be independent creative learners (and how to build capacity of teachers and parents to strengthen this dimension); and baseline of content knowledge; ability to think, problem solve, take initiative, and work well with others.
- Consideration of the number of verified credits (end-of-course tests) required for an advanced studies diploma.
- Public confidence in the accountability/accreditation system.
- What might accreditation include in the future?
    - A requirement for self-study and reporting on the institution's own discovery
    - Rewards for school divisions that make progress in the midst of failure

- o Non-academic achievement measures such as social, emotional, and school climate factors (example: Long Beach, California)
- o Should be aligned and coherent from birth to lifelong learning
- o Differentiated between proactive supports and rewards
- o Create a culture that supports creativity, innovation, and experimentation.
- The incorporation of student growth measures into the accreditation system.
- The use of color coding to make information on the report card clearer (example: Alberta, Canada).

SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Secretary Holton thanked Board members for their hard work. She noted that schools are asked to do more with increasing graduation requirements but given fewer resources and personnel to meet the growing needs of Pre K-12 education. She also indicated Pre K-12 education was the only thing exempt from budget cuts. She emphasized the importance of building capacity at DOE, but recognized the challenges given the budget, and noted the importance of using resources for the most effective programs, and the potential for pooling resources.

Regarding the A-F school grading system, Board members expressed their frustration with the legislative mandate. She advised the Board to think broadly and to include the challenges and opportunities in the Board's report to the General Assembly. The Board noted their intent to redesign the existing report card so that it is a better tool for communicating school and student performance in light of the varied educational and informational needs of our students, parents, educators, and communities. The Board indicated the revised report card would be a clearer communication tool than the A-F grading system.

CONTINUATION OF OPEN DISCUSSION

Mr. Braunlich asked Board members to reflect on what issues/topics they would like to explore further:

- How to recognize and incorporate growth into the accreditation system.
- Peer group support systems.
- Differentiated accountability system tiered with rewards.
- How to build capacity at DOE.
- Local school divisions' professional learning communities.
- Regional and interstate sharing of best practices.
- Teacher and school leaders – professional development, career ladders, and licensure.
- Blending the traditional educational system with personalized learning.
- How to encourage year-round schools.
- Recruitment and retention of teachers in Virginia and professional development for current teachers.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

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President