

DRAFT MINUTES
Virginia Board of Education
Committee on Evidence-Based Policymaking
Monday, April 2, 2018
9:30 a.m.

Washington Conference Room, James Monroe Building
101 North 14th Street, Richmond, Virginia

Welcome and Opening Comments

The following Board of Education (Board) members were present for the April 2, 2018, meeting of the Committee on Evidence-Based Policymaking: Kim Adkins (chair); Diane Atkinson; Dr. Jamelle Wilson and Dr. Tamara Wallace. Dr. Steven Constantino, Acting Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Cindy Cave, Assistant Superintendent of Policy and Communications, Mrs. Shelley Loving-Ryder, Assistant Superintendent of Student Assessment and School Improvement, Ms. Emily Webb, Director of Board Relations, Dr. Lynn Sodat, Director of Program Administration and Accountability, Ms. Carol Sylvester, Title II Coordinator, and Ms. Elizabeth Morris, Senior Policy Analyst, were also present.

Ms. Adkins, chair of this committee, convened the meeting at 9:30 a.m. and provided an overview of the meeting agenda.

Approval of the Minutes from the January 24, 2018 Committee Meeting

Mrs. Atkinson made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 24, 2018 committee meeting. Dr. Wilson seconded the motion but commented that typos should be fixed prior to posting, and the draft minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comment

Ms. Adkins opened the floor to public comment. Ms. Donna Sayegh provided public comment on teacher equity.

Presentation: Ensuring Equitable Access to Excellent Educators in Virginia: An Overview of the 2015 Teacher Equity Plan

A copy of the presentation is available in the Board Relations office. To receive a copy, please contact Ms. Sonya Broady at sonya.broadv@doe.virginia.gov.

Dr. Lynn Sodat, director, office of program administration and accountability, introduced Ms. Carol Sylvester, title II coordinator. Ms. Sylvester presented a review of the 2015 Teacher Equity Plan, which began in 2006 as a requirement of No Child Left Behind. Since the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act, there is uncertainty about the continuation of the plan as no guidance has been issued from the United States Department of Education (USED). In the overview, Ms. Sylvester provided an update on many data points from the 2015 plan.

On slide six, Mrs. Atkinson inquired why there was a change in the definition of an inexperienced teacher from three years teaching to first year of teaching. Ms. Sylvester responded that she wasn't sure why USED changed the definition. Dr. Wilson asked if there was discussion on Virginia changing their definition to first year of teaching. Ms. Sylvester responded that there was discussion which took into account the quality of available data. Ultimately, Virginia chose to adopt USED's recommendation. Ms. Adkins responded that in her reading, the majority of states define an inexperienced teacher with one-year or less of teaching.

Committee discussion:

In regards to slides 43-45, which highlighted best practices in local division efforts to address teacher quality, Dr. Wilson commented that it would be helpful to better understand these efforts and partnership so that the Board can share these successful initiatives across the Commonwealth. Dr. Constantino stated that this could be a wonderful opportunity to highlight the workforce development opportunities within the teaching profession. Ms. Adkins encouraged the committee to think about possible opportunities to highlight the profession with the Virginia Chamber, Secretary of Commerce and Trade, Secretary of Education, and others.

Mrs. Atkinson inquired if there was a definition of "ineffective teacher." Ms. Sylvester responded that each state can develop their own definition for an "ineffective teacher." Mrs. Atkinson further inquired if the Office of School Improvement was involved in the development of this definition. Ms. Sylvester responded that they weren't involved in the development of the definition but could be consulted. The Division of Teacher Education and Licensure is involved in the development of the definition. Dr. Constantino commented that under the ESEA flexibility waiver, states were required to develop a teacher evaluation system but those requirements are not included under ESSA. Mrs. Atkinson responded that she thought it would be worthwhile for the Board to look at Virginia's current teacher evaluation system to see if any updates were needed.

After Ms. Sylvester's presentation, Ms. Adkins offered brief comments on equity. She stated that she liked the definition provided by the National Association of State Board of Education that defined equity as students receiving the resources they need to be successful. She continued that when the committee makes recommendations to the Board, that a clear definition of equity is required. During the first committee meeting, the committee stated that their initial focus would be on teacher quality and development for all students to have access to a high-quality educator and the development of the Profile of a Virginia Educator. Ms. Adkins continued that the committee should give clear guidance to the Department about a specific equity focus to ensure that the work is not duplicative of what others are working on already. Mrs. Atkinson responded that an equity definition is important but how does the committee apply the definition directly to their work.

Ms. Adkins reviewed a report from the Education Trust entitled [Tackling Gaps in Access to Strong Teachers: What State Leaders Can Do](#), where she highlighted five areas that state leaders should focus on to overturn inequities to access to strong teachers. Further, Ms. Adkins outlined the Board's policy levers for impacting change which include issuing guidance to school divisions, creating or amending regulations, requesting legislative changes or funding, and convening groups and stakeholders.

Discussion on the *McDuffy v. Secretary of Education* Ruling

Mrs. Atkinson began discussion on the *McDuffy* case by asking several questions. She stated that she wanted to know what did Massachusetts do after the *McDuffy* decision was handed down and how did Massachusetts decide what was most important to provide to students to move the needle and close achievement gaps. In addition to a teacher, what supports or services need to be provided to students to achieve success. Ms. Adkins responded that resources and funding drove the success Massachusetts has experienced in creating a more equitable system and closing achievement gaps. Mrs. Atkinson followed-up that she wanted to know how Massachusetts figure out how to reallocate resources to make an impact.

Ms. Adkins asked if Virginia's current funding model already allocates based on need. Mrs. Atkinson responded that the Standards of Quality were set in 1985 but the student population has changed drastically since that time with higher degrees of poverty, a larger English as a Second Language (ESL) population, and higher percentage of students with special needs. Additionally, there is more information and data available on what are important components to provide for all students to receive a quality education. Dr. Constantino commented that the Board's recent reforms to the Standards of Accreditation may not be supportive of the 1985 SOQ's. Dr. Cave offered that the committee needs to think about what are fundamental services and supports (wrap-around services) that all students should receive then figure out how much it costs to provide these services to students. Dr. Cave continued that in the *McDuffy* case, there was great disparity in the opportunities and experiences offered to students in certain school divisions but didn't fully understand from reading the decision what specifically needed to be provided to all students to ensure equity. Dr. Constantino commented that he had read something recently that stated you cannot achieve equity without a social-emotional learning component, which may mean that mental health needs and trauma informed care will need to be part of the supports offered by school divisions.

Dr. Constantino offered that staff are working to secure Dr. David Driscoll, former Massachusetts Commissioner of Education, as a speaker for the Board retreat on April 24. Dr. Driscoll can speak more on what Massachusetts did in response to the *McDuffy* decision.

Discussion on Next Steps

Ms. Adkins asked the committee if there was consensus on whether to meet again on April 25th. Dr. Wallace asked if staff could drill down and provide division-level data on the data sets that were provided in Ms. Sylvester's presentation. Dr. Sodot responded that it would take some time to organize division-level data. Dr. Wallace stated that division-level data would be helpful as the committee tried to think about specific strategies and recommendations.

Dr. Wilson asked if there were lessons that the committee could learn from divisions within Virginia as it relates to equity and teacher quality. Mrs. Atkinson asked if there are divisions or schools that have made significant gains in this area. Dr. Wallace responded that she would like to hear from school divisions that are facing challenges to see what supports they need.

Ms. Adkins asked what the process was for defining equity. Dr. Cave responded that the committee's discussion today has continued to narrow the definition of equity. Dr. Wilson stated that having a discussion on how the committee will define equity would be helpful and asked that the committee be reminded of its definition every meeting to ensure that the committee is thoughtful about prioritizing the components of equity.

Ms. Adkins stated that she won't be able to attend the April meeting. The committee agreed that it would be best to wait until May to meet so Ms. Adkins can attend. Ms. Webb asked committee members to send data and speaker requests to her and Ms. Adkins for follow-up. The committee agreed to meet on May 22nd at 9:30a.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.