

DRAFT MINUTES
Virginia Board of Education
Standing Committee on the Standards of Quality
Wednesday, July 24, 2019
1:00 p.m.
Jefferson 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 July 24, 2019 meeting of the Committee on the Standards of Quality: Kim Adkins, Diane Atkinson, Pamela Davis-Vaught, Dr. Francisco Durán, Daniel Gecker, Dr. Keisha Pexton, and Dr. Jamelle Wilson. Dr. James Lane, Superintendent of Public Instruction, was also present. Anne Holton and Tammy Mann were absent.

Mr. Gecker, chair of this committee, convened the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Public Comment

Mr. Gecker opened the floor to public comment. No individuals requested to address the committee.

Presentation: Overview of Revisions to the Draft Standards of Quality Proposals

Link to presentation: [Draft SOQ Proposals for Board of Education Consideration](#) (Word)

Zachary Robbins, Director of Policy for the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), and Emily Webb, Director of Board Relations for VDOE, presented an overview of revisions to the draft Standards of Quality (SOQ) proposals.

Mr. Robbins began the presentation by discussing the proxy used to identify at-risk students for the purpose of the SOQ proposals. Mr. Robbins discussed the differences in using the students eligible for free and reduced priced lunch and the students identified as economically disadvantaged in the accountability system. The students identified as economically disadvantaged include students eligible for free and reduced priced lunch, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients, Medicaid eligible students, and students experiencing homelessness. The students eligible to receive free and reduced priced lunch include families with income 130 percent below the poverty level, as well as families receiving TANF and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. Mr. Robbins explained that there is significant overlap between the two categories. However, there are social and cultural reasons why some students would be identified as economically disadvantaged, but not receive free or reduced lunch, or vice versa. For example, some families will complete free and reduced priced

lunch applications, but elect not to participate in Medicaid or TANF. Conversely, some families participate in Medicaid and/or TANF without completing the free and reduced price lunch application at school. Generally speaking, older students are less likely to complete a free and reduced price lunch application, regardless of family income.

In addition, the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) – a program that allows high-poverty schools/divisions to serve meals at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household applications – has negatively impacted the validity of free lunch eligibility data, as all students in a CEP school or division automatically receive free meals under CEP, regardless of income. Thus, there is no current free and reduced price lunch data available from such schools/divisions. In these divisions, students would not be identified if their families did not participate in TANF or Medicaid.

The free lunch participation rate is the current poverty indicator used to distribute state funds. This methodology was amended by the General Assembly in the Appropriation Act to provide that a school participating in CEP would use the free lunch data from the most recent year prior to entering into CEP. Thus, some schools are currently using data from as far back as 2013 for the purpose of distributing funds. The SOQ proposals presented at this meeting requiring a poverty indicator use this same methodology. However, language has also been included to indicate that, whenever the Appropriation Act methodology is updated, the new methodology would also be used in the SOQ.

Mr. Robbins presented the following draft SOQ proposals to the Board for consideration:

- Targeted Compensation Adjustments
 - Establish provisions in the SOQ to provide targeted compensation adjustments for proficient, experienced teachers to teach in high-poverty schools
 - Require school divisions to equitably distribute experienced and effective teachers among all schools
- At-Risk Add-On Programs
 - As an alternative to the Targeted Compensation Adjustment program, move the At-Risk Add-On program into the Standards of Quality, provide additional funds, and reform the program to distribute additional positions and to provide targeted compensation adjustments for experienced teachers to teach in high poverty schools.
- Teacher Leaders and Teacher Mentors
 - Establish a new Teacher Leader program, and expand the existing Teacher Mentor program, whereby additional compensation and additional time is provided during the instructional day for locally-designated staff to serve in leadership and mentorship program roles

- English Learner Teachers
 - Amend the staffing requirements for EL teachers to distribute positions based upon student proficiency levels, while maintaining local flexibility in deploying those positions
 - Staffing ratio ranges from 1:25 for least proficient, to 1:58 for most proficient
- Specialized Student Support Personnel
 - Remove the school nurse, school social worker, and school psychologist positions from the SOQ support position category
 - Create a new staffing category for “specialized student support personnel” in the SOQ, with specified ratios for these positions
- Reading Specialists
 - Provide reading specialist positions for students in grades K-5, based upon the number of students failing 3rd grade Standards of Learning reading assessments
- Work-Based Learning Coordinators
 - Establish state-level and regional work-based learning coordinators to foster connections between school divisions and the business community to advance work-based learning opportunities in each school division
- Class-Size Reduction
 - Move the K-3 Class Size Reduction program into the SOQ, and expand the program to include 4th through 6th grades
- Principal Mentorship
 - Establish a statewide principal mentorship program to strengthen and foster the expanding role of quality school leaders that support teacher retention and student achievement
- School Counselors
 - Reaffirm the Board’s 2016 recommendation to provide one full-time for every 250 students
- Elementary School Principals
 - Reaffirm the Board’s 2016 recommendation to provide one full-time in every school
- Assistant Principals
 - Reaffirm the Board’s 2016 recommendation to provide one full-time for every 400 students
- Eliminate Recession-Era Savings
 - Reaffirm the Board’s 2016 recommendation to eliminate the measures that were implemented during the recession: the “support position cap” and the temporary flexibility language waiving certain staffing requirements

One Board member asked about the fiscal impact of the local match for Targeted Compensation Adjustments for local school divisions. Mr. Robbins explained that the cost for localities was

not included in the estimated cost projections in the presentation. It was requested that the cost for localities be included in the future, to allow Board members to understand that impact. It was also requested that staff add the number of schools in each category to the Targeted Compensation Adjustment graph image.

Board members discussed the Reading Specialist proposal and whether to use the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) or 3rd grade SOL reading assessment failure rates. One Board member noted that the PALS is a diagnostic instrument, whereas the SOL assessment measures student outcomes. Ms. Webb suggested that a hybrid of both the PALS and 3rd grade SOL reading assessments be considered for this proposal.

One Board member inquired about available data regarding work-based learning and how it is currently coordinated in Virginia. VDOE does not have data on this at this time. Ms. Webb suggested that staffing these positions through VDOE, via a regional approach, as opposed to providing staff in individual school divisions, would be beneficial to reflect the regional nature of business communities in the Commonwealth.

Dr. Lane clarified that Class Size Reduction was expanded to grades 4 through 6 to address equity, as this initiative focuses on poverty. This expansion is supported by requests from teachers for smaller class size and more individualization in the classroom. Ms. Webb noted that the At-Risk Add-On funding could be aligned with Class Size Reduction, as both provide additional funds in response to high poverty.

Board members discussed the effectiveness of class size reduction in achieving equity. One Board member suggested that hiring teachers with more experience in high-poverty divisions may be preferable than reducing class size. Dr. Jennifer Piver-Renna, Director of Research for VDOE, stated that reduction in class size has not been demonstrated to consistently impact student achievement; however, it has been shown to help with student behavior. One Board member suggested that class size reduction may help improve school climate, which could aid with teacher attraction and retention.

One Board member suggested incorporating the class size reduction initiative into the At-Risk Add-On expansion, as that money could then be used to hire more experienced teachers.

Regarding principal mentorship, Mr. Robbins asked Board members to consider who should be required to participate in mentorship (e.g., new principals, new assistant principals, principals of schools with level three indicators). Board members discussed the effectiveness of principal mentorship, with several members expressing general support for this initiative.

Board members discussed the procedure for the SOQ review moving forward. One approach would be for the Board to issue Standards of Quality, with the General Assembly subsequently voting on the issued standards. Alternatively, the Board may make recommendations to the General Assembly regarding the standards. The Board must decide what approach to take.

Staff was asked to research the percentage of teachers in hard-to-staff divisions with five years of experience and identified as proficient. Ms. Webb suggested that, as an alternative to the Targeted Compensation Adjustments, the Board could instead direct divisions to use the At-Risk Add-On funding to either reduce class size or provide a compensation adjustment to attract and retain more experienced teachers. The K-3 Class Size Reduction proposal could also be combined with the At-Risk Add-On funding, to combine those resources, while providing more flexibility for divisions.

One Board member expressed concern that localities and stakeholders may feel as though they are losing funding if these well-known funding sources (i.e., K-3 Class Size Reduction and At-Risk Add-On funding) are moved or combined, even though such funding would not be lost.

Board members discussed the need for reading specialists. One Board member stated that reading specialists are essential in elementary schools, as demonstrated by Standards of Learning assessment scores.

Board members discussed the Work-Based Learning Coordinator proposal. Dr. Lane explained that individuals would be employed by VDOE to work within each region. This could help build a more cohesive and comprehensive system of work-based learning throughout the Commonwealth. One Board member noted that this proposal aligns with ongoing work of the governor's office, specifically the STEM Commission.

Board members discussed prioritization of the SOQ proposals. Some Board members emphasized equity and the equitable distribution of teachers, including EL teachers, as a priority. However, the Board did not reach consensus on prioritization, and will continue to discuss this at subsequent meetings.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.