

MINUTES
Virginia Board of Education
Standing Committee on School and Division Accountability
Wednesday, June 21, 2017
10:30 a.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 June 21, 2017 meeting of the Committee on School and Division Accountability: Diane Atkinson; Dr. Billy Cannaday, Jr.; James Dillard; Daniel Gecker; Anne Holton; Elizabeth Lodal; Sal Romero, Jr.; and Dr. Jamelle Wilson. Dr. Steven Staples, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, was also present. Kim Adkins was present when the meeting was reconvened after breaking for lunch.

Ms. Atkinson, chair of this committee, convened the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

Approval of the Minutes from the May 23, 2017 Committee Meeting

Ms. Lodal made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 23, 2017 committee meeting. Dr. Wilson seconded the motion, and the draft minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comment

Heidi Casper, an English Language Learner teacher in Chesterfield County, spoke against lowering the cut score for the WIDA ACCESS for ELs test.

Presentation: Review of Division-Level Memorandum of Understanding for Richmond City Public Schools

Link to presentation: [Division-Level Review Process](#)

Beverly Rabil, Director of School Improvement for the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), presented the Board with information on the division-level review process, including a new review tool used by staff during this process. The presentation focused on the division-level review and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Richmond City Public Schools. This division-level review of Richmond City Public Schools was the first time in which the new review tool has been used. The review tool was developed by Dr. James Strong, a faculty member at the College of William and Mary, and Ms. Rabil presented information on the key elements of the tool to the Board. Previously, VDOE had used a school-level review tool, which was partially aligned with the division-level tool, but focuses more on student academic achievement.

The Board discussed the correlation between professional development and student achievement and the alignment of state accountability expectations to school administration education programs in Virginia.

Presentation: Review of Proposed Changes to Accreditation Indicators and Revisions to the Regulations Establishing the Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia

Link to presentation: [Review of Proposed Changes to Standards of Accreditation](#) (slides 1-30)

Dr. Jennifer Piver-Renna, Senior Executive Director for Research for VDOE, and Shelley Loving-Ryder, Assistant Superintendent for Student Assessment and School Improvement for VDOE, presented a review of the proposed changes to the school quality indicators in response to Board inquiries from the May 24, 2017 Board retreat.

- College and Career Readiness
 - Board members suggested changing the name of the indicator to “College, Career, and Civic Readiness,” including a measure of civic engagement in the indicator, and shifting focus from participation to successful completion for work-based learning experiences.
 - The proposed College, Career, and Civic Readiness indicator would consist of an unduplicated count of the following, divided by the number of students in the graduation cohort:
 - § Students receiving credit for advanced coursework,
 - § CTE completers also having a CTE credential,
 - § Students successfully completing a work-based learning experience, and
 - § Students successfully completing a service-based learning experience.
- Chronic Absenteeism
 - Board members suggested adding a tolerance to the chronic absenteeism rate calculation for students who are chronically ill.
 - The proposed chronic absenteeism indicator would exclude the attendance records for any student approved for homebound instruction at any point in the school year.
- Achievement Gaps
 - Board members requested data to compare achievement gaps among peer schools, including high- and low-poverty, urban and rural schools.

- The requested data demonstrates that achievement gaps in English and mathematics exist among all school types. For English, achievement gaps are more likely to occur in high-poverty schools in both urban and rural settings. For math, achievement gaps are more likely to occur in high-poverty urban schools, but are more evenly distributed among high- and low-poverty rural schools.
- English Learner Progress
 - Board members requested data on using listening and speaking subscales to measure English Learner (EL) progress rather than composite scores.
 - Currently, progress requirements for ELs are based on the student's overall composite score on the WIDA ACCESS for ELs assessment—this score includes a combined measure of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
 - The WIDA ACCESS for ELs 2.0, a new version of the test, was administered for the first time in 2015-16. Thus, two years of data to measure progress on the new test version will be available in July 2017. Dr. Piver-Renna recommended revisiting this data request in the fall of 2017, when two years of data from the new test version could be used to examine progress and validate findings.
- Performance Recognition Criteria
 - Board members suggested adding additional categories of recognition to identify high-performing, high-poverty schools.
 - The proposed category for performance recognition would recognize schools with 70 percent or more economically disadvantaged students that have:
 - § any indicator at or above the 90th percentile compared to peer, high-poverty schools, or
 - § all reporting groups above the state benchmark for achievement gaps.
 - The proposed category for improvement recognition would recognize schools with 70 percent or more economically disadvantaged students, that have:
 - § met the growth or improvement criteria for any indicator for two consecutive years, or
 - § all reporting groups decrease in the failure rate on state assessments for two consecutive years for achievement gaps.

- Improvement Criteria
 - Board members requested clarification on the improvement criteria which allows schools to move from Level Two to Level One based on improvement in the indicator.
 - The currently proposed Level One improvement criteria benefits schools for each indicator except the Graduation Completion Index (GCI). Dr. Piver-Renna recommended retaining the improvement criteria as proposed for Level One.
 - Dr. Piver-Renna proposed adding a floor to the Level Two improvement criteria for the Academic Achievement indicators, which allows schools to move from Level Three to Level Two based on improvement. The floor would establish that for the Academic Achievement indicators, the improvement criteria would only apply to schools that had a combined rate of at least 50 percent.

The Board discussed the following points:

- Board members discussed chronic absenteeism, and inquired why chronic absenteeism is not being used a school quality indicator for high schools. Dr. Piver-Renna stated that the intent was to balance the number of indicators for each school level. As currently proposed, high schools have more indicators than elementary and middle schools, due to the dropout rate, college and career readiness, and GCI, which are not used in elementary and middle schools.
- Several board members noted the importance of attendance for high school students. The Board reached consensus that chronic absenteeism should be included as a school quality indicator for high schools.

The Board suspended the meeting for lunch. Upon reconvening the meeting, Ms. Atkinson welcomed Ms. Adkins to the meeting.

Presentation: Review of Proposed Changes to Accreditation Indicators and Revisions to the *Regulations Establishing the Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia, Part VIII*

Link to presentation: [Summary of Edits to Standards of Accreditation Regulations](#) (slides 31-42)

Dr. Cynthia Cave, Assistant Superintendent for Policy and Communications for VDOE, presented proposed changes Part VIII of the Standards of Accreditation. These changes reflect the amendments to the school quality indicators resulting from the Board’s May 24, 2017 retreat.

- Throughout Standards of Accreditation, “citizenship” and “civic readiness” were added to reflect the Board’s support for Virginia high school students to graduate ready for college, career, and citizenship responsibilities.

- References to colors associated with performance levels were deleted throughout the regulations, instead referring to performance levels only by their associated numbers (i.e. Level One, Level Two, and Level Three).
- School quality indicators and performance levels were reorganized and described in tables, with benchmark minimums. References to the separate guidance document were deleted, and language was added to permit the Board to modify the range of each performance level.
- Academic achievement indicator benchmarks for Level Two now include a floor level of performance (50 percent) to be met in order for improvement to be recognized.
- Language was added permitting the Board to adopt special provisions for any indicator.
- The description of chronic absenteeism was revised to exempt students approved to receive homebound instruction from the calculation of the rate.
- Language was added permitting local school boards to appeal performance level designations in limited circumstances warranting special consideration.
- Language was added to provide examples of exemplar performance categories. This would encompass the recognition of performance for schools by peer group, as discussed earlier by Dr. Piver-Renna.
- Language was added to link the comprehensive school-level plan required by the Standards of Quality to the comprehensive needs assessments and multi-year improvement plans in the Standards of Accreditation. Language mandating school divisions to submit such plans to VDOE was removed. Instead, plans would be reviewed through a process, which may include peer review or selection by VDOE for review.
- Language was added to provide for an agreement process to be established between the state superintendent and local superintendent, depending on the level of direction and intervention needed.
- Language was added to provide that “Accreditation Denied” would occur following a Board review for failure to implement corrective action plans with fidelity. Additionally, a local school board would be given an opportunity to correct their failure to act on a corrective action plan and, if successful in a timely manner, may have the denied accreditation status rescinded.
- The verified credits required for English was increased from one to two, such that a verified credit must be earned in both reading and writing. All references to “English” verified credits have been changed to “English (reading and writing).”

- Language was added to require career and technical education choices to incorporate knowledge of regional workforce needs and opportunities.
- Language was added to clarify that the content of the associated course in history or social science must be mastered along with the authentic performance assessment used to earn a verified credit.
- Language was added stating that alternative means may be used to deliver the career investigation course in middle school.
- Clarification was added to state that EL students with fewer than 11 semesters may only be removed from the school quality indicators related to academic achievement.

The Board discussed the following points:

- One Board member discussed the use of the term “modifiable” in the language in 8VAC20-131-380(A)(4), which states, “Performance in the indicator is modifiable through school division and school related policies and procedures.” Board members supported changing “is modifiable” to “can be positively impacted.”
- Growth assessment was discussed. One Board member expressed concern about the lack of a clear mandate that growth be counted as a form of achievement. This was clarified by adding language that clearly expresses the inclusion of student growth in English (reading), mathematics, and EL progress.
- The Board agreed to reorder the stated purposes for determining the quality of schools for accountability and accreditation in 8VAC20-131-370, such that the following order is reflected: (1) Building on strengths in schools and addressing specific areas needing improvement; (2) Driving continuous improvement in school achievement for all schools; (3) Informing areas for technical assistance and the use of school improvement resources; and (4) Providing a comprehensive picture of school quality information to the public.
- The Board discussed the language added in 8VAC20-131-380(E)(3) that would permit the Board to adopt special provisions for any indicator. This language was proposed to give the Board the ability to modify indicators, as necessary. Board members discussed adding language that would also allow the Board to remove indicators in the future. However, this would not be permissible outside of the Administrative Process Act.
- One Board member asked how the school quality indicators will be evaluated to determine effectiveness, once several years of data is available for consideration. Board members discussed developing a process for the future review of indicators.
- The Board discussed the GCI and how growth could be appropriately measured for this indicator. Language previously proposed in 8VAC20-131-370(E)(1) stated that schools could meet the Level Two performance level by “decreasing the failure rate” by ten percent or more. Staff proposed changing this such that schools could meet the Level

Two performance level by “increasing the index” by ten percent or more. Board members expressed concern with this change, as requiring a ten percent increase in the index is a significantly greater demand than a ten percent decrease in the failure rate.

- Board members discussed measuring growth on academic achievement indicators. One Board member noted concern that the Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments are not intended to measure growth. Ms. Loving-Ryder explained that, while SOL assessments were originally intended as pass/fail tests, the test items can be configured in different ways to measure growth, and a vertical scale can be used. Additionally, one Board member asked if growth could be measured for third grade SOL assessments. Ms. Loving-Ryder answered that growth could be measured for grade three SOL, if the assessments were administered at both the beginning and end of the year.
- Board members expressed concern that measuring growth is cost prohibitive to some divisions without the resources to do so, as this is often done through outside vendors. One Board member noted that the outside vendors may no longer be necessary if SOL assessments could be used to measure growth.
- Board members discussed language proposed by staff to be added in 8VAC20-131-380(E) stating that, “The board *shall* adopt valid and reliable measures of student growth...” This language would allow the Board flexibility to adopt growth measures in the future. A majority of the Board members agreed to add the language proposed by staff, with the amendment that it read, “The board *may* adopt valid and reliable measures of student growth...”
- One Board member requested that language emphasizing the importance of instruction in history and social science be added to the list of conditions that school divisions are required to certify for preaccreditation.
- Board members discussed school improvement plans and agreed to eliminate requirements that all such plans be submitted to and reviewed by VDOE. This allows VDOE to focus on reviewing the plans of schools accredited with conditions and schools that are Level Two on the academic indicators. Board members also reached consensus on the following points:
 - A school improvement plan for a school quality indicator at Level Two would require review and approval by the local school board.
 - VDOE would have the ability to selectively audit any school improvement plans.
 - A school quality academic indicator at Level Two would trigger an academic review by VDOE and a peer review process of school improvement plans for such indicators.

Presentation: Review of the Consolidated State Plan under the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA)

Link to presentation: [ESSA: Summary of Virginia’s Federal Programs Application](#)

Dr. Lynn Sodat, Director of the Office of Program Administration and Accountability for VDOE, and Ms. Loving-Ryder presented information to the Board on the ESSA state plan for Virginia.

- ESSA allows for states to provide a single, consolidated application that covers all federal programs. Virginia will submit such a consolidated application, which is often referred to as the “ESSA state plan.”
- In developing Virginia’s ESSA state plan, VDOE received significant engagement from stakeholders around the Commonwealth. In the fall of 2016, an ESSA survey was widely distributed with over 15,000 responses received. Numerous meetings were held with stakeholder groups. Topical roundtable discussions involving teachers, division leaders, higher education, education organizations, private school leaders, advocacy groups, and parents were held. Webinars were held for division federal program coordinators.
- In the ESSA state plan, alignment between Virginia’s federal accountability application and the state accountability plan is a priority, such that state’s methodology would be integrated into the federal system whenever possible.
- ESSA requires each state to establish long-term goals and interim measures of progress for five indicators:

<u>ESSA Requirement</u>	<u>Virginia’s Indicator</u>
Student achievement	Combined rates on SOL reading and mathematics assessments
Academic progress or growth for elementary and middle schools	Progress tables (value tables)
Graduation rates	Federal Graduation Indicator
Progress in ELs gaining proficiency in English	ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 assessment
School quality or student success	Chronic absenteeism

- For reading SOL assessments, the long-term goal is set as a 75 percent pass rate, using the combined rate, and the interim measures of progress are set at seven intervals. For mathematics SOL assessments, the long-term goal is set as a 70 percent pass rate, using the combined rate. For chronic absenteeism, the long-term goal is set as ten percent.
- During the 2015-2016 year, the new ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 replaced the ACCESS for ELLs assessments. These were administered in Virginia in early 2016. Two years of

data are needed from the new ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 assessment before long-term goals and interim measures of progress can be established.

- The long-term goals and interim measures of progress will be used to identify schools for comprehensive support and improvement and targeted support and improvement.
- The comprehensive support and improvement category will be identified every three years based on the performance of all students and will consist of the lowest five percent of Title I schools plus any school with a federal graduation rate below 67 percent.
- The additional targeted support and improvement category will be identified every three years based on the performance of reporting groups and will consist of any school that performs at a lower level than comprehensive support schools, plus any school with a low federal graduation rate. Beginning with the 2019-20 school year, a subset of additional targeted support and improvement schools will be identified annually for targeted support and improvement. This subset will consist of schools that do not improve after having been identified.
- Title I schools identified for additional targeted support and improvement that do not meet the exit criteria after three years will be identified for comprehensive support and improvement.
- Divisions with schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement will receive support from VDOE to develop, implement, and monitor interventions. Such support will be consistent with the support that the schools identified as “Accredited with Conditions” will receive.
- Additional actions at the division and school level will be required if schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement do not meet the exit criteria after three years. Such actions will include entering into an MOU with the Board, meeting with VDOE staff, and submitting progress reports to VDOE.

Suggested Amendments to the Proposed Language in the *Regulations Establishing the Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia, Parts I-VII*

The Board resumed their discussion of the changes to the Standards of Accreditation, Parts I-VII. The Board discussed the following points:

- Board members agreed that a capital “B” should be used when referencing the Board of Education as “Board” throughout the regulations.
- Board members agreed to amend language throughout the Standards of Accreditation such that “... a *high* quality education...” is used, in order to be consistent with the Standards of Quality which uses the term “high quality.”

- Board members discussed the writing assessment. One Board member proposed adopting language to allow for locally-approved, alternative, authentic assessments to the state high school writing test, as is permitted for social studies. This would allow school divisions to continue offering the state writing assessment, but would also allow divisions to experiment with approved alternatives.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.