

MINUTES
Virginia Board of Education
Committee on School and Division Accountability
October 21, 2015
1:00 p.m.
Jefferson Conference Room; James Monroe Building

Welcome and Opening Comments

The following Board of Education (Board) members were present for the October 21, 2015 Committee on School and Division Accountability meeting: Diane Atkinson; Dr. Billy Cannaday, Jr.; James Dillard; Darla Edwards; Elizabeth Vickrey Lodal; Sal Romero, Jr; and Joan Wodiska. Dr. Steven Staples, the superintendent of public instruction, was also present. At the beginning of the meeting, Dr. Cannaday, president of the Board, announced that Dr. Lorraine Lange has resigned from the Board for personal and professional reasons. It is expected that a replacement will be announced in the near future.

Ms. Atkinson, chairman of this committee, convened the meeting and welcomed the Board members and guests. She noted that today's meeting would focus primarily on the revision to the Standards of Accreditation (SOA).

Approval of Minutes from the September 9, 2015 Meeting

The minutes from the last meeting held on September 9, 2015 were adopted by the committee members.

Public Comment

Dr. Paula Leach, vice-president for community engagement and chair of the science policy committee for the Virginia Mathematics and Science Coalition (VMSC), spoke on behalf of that organization. She described the organization's focus and provided comments regarding the SOA. She said VMSC supports the addition of a definition of the term *laboratory science* in the SOA because providing parameters will eliminate the ambiguity that has surrounded that term for high school courses in Virginia. In addition, she said the VMSC asks that the Board re-consider the removal of the language presented at the July 22 Accountability Committee meeting that proposed a change in the number of science discipline areas for the standard diploma. VMSC looks forward to offering more input as the SOA review process and the SOL review process for science and math move forward.

Juanita Jo Matkins spoke on behalf of the Virginia Association of Science Teachers (VAST) which represents science teachers across the commonwealth of Virginia. She is also affiliated with the College of William and Mary. She said laboratory science is an essential component in the development of understanding about science and in developing skills that prepare high school students for the workforce and for higher education. She said the organization commends the efforts of this committee and the

Board in defining laboratory science and in clarifying the Board's position regarding the consistent implementation of science laboratory lessons in the high schools. The VAST asked that the Board and the Accountability Committee engage it in these conversations as they all want the best possible outcome for students.

At the conclusion of these comments, Ms. Atkinson asked if there was anyone else who wanted to provide public comments, but there was no one else.

Planning Update: High School Program Innovation Planning Grantees

Region I
Fairfax County Public Schools
Newport News City Public Schools
Salem City Public Schools
Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools

Ms. Atkinson introduced this agenda item by providing background information about the \$50,000 high school program innovation planning grants awarded to school divisions in June 2015. She said today a representative from each of these programs will provide a presentation about the programs.

Region I - CodeRVA

Dr. James Lane, superintendent of Goochland County Public Schools, presented on behalf of Region I. He said the new school he and his colleagues are working on in the Metro-Richmond area is called CodeRVA. He said when they started to talk about innovation, they wanted to solve a problem that they were seeing in the Richmond region. There are 30,000 unfilled computer science jobs available in Virginia. However, only 1% of Virginia's students are taking computer science at any time. Eighty percent of all jobs will call for digital skills in the future and some say 100% will have coding or problem-solving requirements.

CodeRVA is composed of all 13 school divisions in Region I as well as Virginia Commonwealth University, J. Sgt. Reynolds (JSRCC) and John Tyler (JTCC) community colleges, as well as the University of Richmond. They have also partnered with Capital One and have reached out to RichTech which represents every major technology vendor in the area. That organization is now a part of the program. They are also trying to break down the elitism mentality that is often part of specialized programs. Thus, they will use an open lottery and they are going to prove that with this innovative model any child in Virginia can be successful in this field.

He pointed out the following innovative elements of the school:

- Students will complete all high school credits during their 9th and 10th grade school years.
- All courses will be personalized/blended learning experiences and/or full-time virtual learning.

- All courses will be built on integration of subject matter and the pedagogy will be project-based.
- All courses will be integrated with a computer science component and school will be 1:1 with technology.
- During grades 11 and 12, students will remain at the high school, but they will work for a company in Richmond called MaxxPotential (Maxx). This company will pay students to complete low level computer science/coding jobs typically outsourced overseas.
- While working for Maxx, students will be able to complete a two-year degree program at JSRCC or JTCC.
- All students will be able to graduate with a two-year degree and extensive work experience.

In addition, the school plans to cap the annual costs at \$7,000 per student. They plan to enroll 82 students the first year, but expect to grow to 800 students. The school will open next fall.

When a Board member asked what waivers they might want, Dr. Lane mentioned the following possibilities:

- Eliminate verified and standard “carnegie credits” for graduation and consider alternative ways to show student mastery.
- Waive elective requirements.
- Waive all reporting requirements until the school is at full capacity.
- Waive all testing requirements and replace SOL tests with nationally normed tests, such as the SAT, AP, and IB examinations.
- Waive certain operational requirements.
- Waive class size and seat time.
- Waive some requirements for teachers, including certifications and certain planning period and contractual requirements.
- Re-think the 990 hours/180 days of instruction.

In addition, this school may re-think certain school calendar requirements, including a Pre-Labor Day opening. The school will be governed by a regional school board.

As part of his presentation, Dr. Lane also briefly discussed High Tech High, a school he visited in San Diego as part of the school’s planning process.

He said the Region I group has held a symposium with nearly 100 people in attendance. A director has been hired (Dr. Yvonne Brandon) and they are in the process of determining a facility location, developing a curriculum, applying for their waivers, and marketing the program to students.

Board members had the following comments and questions:

- One Board member said she thought it would be great to build on what has been learned in the field. However, she said she is concerned that he is going to try to limit the cost per student to \$7,000 per student as there will be some equity

issues and remediation may be necessary. There may also be compliance issues, and she wants assurance that the school will be in compliance with all federal requirements. In addition, she said she would want to know that there would be equitable access and she stated that that did not come out in the presentation. Dr. Lane said they are working with VCU to address access. Compliance requirements are a prerequisite.

- Ms. Atkinson encouraged Board members to discuss other issues with Dr. Lane at another time as time was very limited during this meeting. She also told Dr. Lane that some of the waivers he mentioned are statutory. He said he is aware of those concerns.

At the end of this presentation, Ms. Atkinson acknowledged the presence of Jennie O'Holleran, the deputy secretary for education, who is leaving her current position and accepting a position in the Governor's office as a senior policy advisor.

Fairfax County Public Schools – Global STEM Challenges Program

Ms. Atkinson introduced Scott Settar, technology & engineering education and STEAM integration manager for Fairfax County Public Schools. He provided an overview of the Global Stem Challenges Program for the Board members and explained that it is a STEM-focused, interdisciplinary three-year program concentrating on global problems and integrating the grand challenges of engineering.

Mr. Settar discussed the following program innovations within the program:

- All students must complete Algebra I in the 8th grade – this is the only prerequisite.
- Students will complete ten mathematics/science/engineering/computer science credits instead of nine in the three-year time period and computer science will be integrated throughout the program.
- The program will provide a problem-based learning environment that directly correlates to global challenges.
- Real world connections will be emphasized via internships, mentorships, and site-based learning opportunities.
- The Standards of Learning will be met through this program.
- Industry certifications will be offered to all students.

The program will start with a 90-student cohort. They are working closely with business partners.

He also discussed proposed waiver requests:

- Flexibility in teacher endorsement.
- Reciprocity between CTE and science for a 4th year science credit.
- Integration of computer science course into sequence of integrated courses.
- Coding/computer science to count toward the world language requirement for graduation.

- Students enrolled in technology and engineering education courses to receive credit for work-based experience.
- Alternative end-of-year assessments.
- Waiver to allow some modification to the current curriculum.

In the senior year, the students in this program would have an opportunity to work with businesses in internships, to participate in an IB science class, or they could access a dual program. The school division is working with local institutions of higher education around this issue now.

Board discussion followed:

- A Board member asked Mr. Stellar to bring back additional information, including capturing key things learned in a narrative to share with other schools.
- A Board member said much of what they are doing has been tested at the Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Fairfax, Virginia. Interdisciplinary learning works and technology and computer science can be fully embedded. This has been proven to work with highly gifted students and can work with other students, too. She noted that what they are learning can be replicated in other schools.
- Another Board member asked for more information about the partnerships involved in this program by way of internships and shadowing and partnerships with the local workforce investment board. She also asked what they would be doing with job skills, counselling, and advising. In addition, she said she would like to know what works well and what does not in all five programs.
- A Board member said legislators would like to use this process to look at how we change high schools in the future. The information these programs give back to the Board will be exceedingly important.

Newport News City Public Schools

The next presenter was Dr. Ashby Kilgore, superintendent of Newport News City Public Schools. She brought with her Susan Tilley, executive director of secondary leadership; Bryant Nichols, chief academic officer; and Shameka Gerald, who is the principal at Heritage high School. Dr. Kilgore said, with this grant, Heritage High School will be filled with purposeful young people as they design their careers inside the school building as well as in the community with partners.

She then introduced Ms. Tilley who provided a description of what Heritage High 2.0 will look like as a result of this grant and what Heritage looks like now. It has over 1,300 students. Its student body is predominantly African-American with over 75% of the students on free or reduced lunch or economically disadvantaged. Currently there are two special programs at this school, a Governor's STEM Academy and a University Magnet School. Less than 400 students are enrolled in each of these programs. Other students attend this school because they live within the school zone. Heritage is currently not accredited, but is making great gains. Last year gains were made in all four subject areas with double digit gains in two areas. The school division wants to create a career academy so that every student in the school is attending a specialty

program. They already offer internships and field experiences for students in the other two programs and want to offer it for all students at Heritage. Once they implement the new program there, they intend to expand it city-wide. She highlighted the following:

- The students will create a digital portfolio that showcases their learning, work, and credentials.
- They will be guided by a career adviser through all of the steps in the process.
- They want to bring professionals into the classroom.
- They want the students to have real world experiences with blended coursework. They will offer courses in lots of different ways – anywhere, anytime.
- They want the students in the career academy to graduate high school with career certifications.
- They want to adjust what the high school schedule looks like and integrate their course work so the students can abbreviate the number of classes they have to take.
- They also intend to partner with the feeder middle schools to see how much can be done at the middle school level. Currently, over 50% of middle school students in the division earn high school credit before they reach that level. They intend to start this with the freshman class in the next school year.

Board members had the following questions and comments:

- One Board member said he was excited to hear that work will be done at the middle school level.
- Another Board member said she hoped all five grantees will be brought together to share what they have learned and are planning.

Dr. Staples said the department has started the process of working with the grantees so they can share information and learn from each other. Moreover, there are schools, like those being discussed, all over the country. In addition, the department will build a resource bank for use by school divisions. He pointed out that the grantees are in the early stages of the planning process.

Salem City Public Schools

Dr. Alan Seibert, superintendent for Salem City Public Schools, provided information about this division's planning grant efforts. He said Salem High School is a comprehensive high school. With the innovation planning grant, they hope to better prepare students for postsecondary education, training, and employment through the creation of personalized learning opportunities centered on career pathways. The goal is to ensure that every student will have a diploma, a plan, and a purpose.

He discussed the following innovations:

- Career pathways.
- Specific graduation requirements.

- Proficiency-based credit accrual.
- Non-traditional scheduling.
- Advanced learning opportunities.
- Workplace based learning opportunities.

He discussed the following impediments to change:

- Specific graduation requirements.
- Teacher certification/licensure/teacher of record.
- Course approval process.
- Agreements with community colleges.
- School calendar.
- Proficiency-based credit accrual.
- Flexible SOL testing windows.
- Attendance.
- Insurance coverage for off-site work-based learning opportunities.
- Teacher contracts and planning time.
- NCAA eligibility.
- Funding – he hopes that there will be some implementation grants for these programs in the future.

Board members provided the following comments and questions:

- A Board member asked about entrepreneurship and how that is being supported.
- Another Board member asked for information as to what tasks need to be addressed now and some suggestions as to how to create an alternative pathway which would deliver the things he described and help the Board in framing policies.

Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools

Dr. Steven Constantino, superintendent for the Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools, and Dr. Tina Manglicmot, supervisor for instructional technology and innovation, were the presenters for this agenda item. Dr. Constantino said they were very excited to receive this grant. There are three high schools in his division. His goal was to turn each upside down and change it and they will start with Warhill High School. They chose Warhill largely because there is much innovation going on there now. They knew they could not do this alone so they have created partnerships with William and Mary, Thomas Nelson Community College, and the Superintendent's Business and Community Advisory Group. They will start with 100 freshmen representative of the division. The core of what they are doing is centered on design thinking and competency-based learning and they will have advisory teams for the students.

In addition, they have looked at the necessity for waivers or slight deviations from policy:

- Clock hours.
- Diploma requirements.
- Relevant subject matter before promotion.
- SOL.
- Verified credits.
- School year (180 days/990 hours).
- Diploma requirements.
- Ratios and licensure.
- SOL testing windows.

They are reviewing policies now and will come back to the Board with additional information. Moreover, they have not settled on a name for the program yet.

Board discussion followed. A Board member mentioned that he had heard citizenship mentioned in only one of the presentations. Ms. Atkinson pointed out that what was heard today was only a snapshot of progress made at the beginning stages of this process. In addition, the Board can ask for additional information.

Report from SOL Innovation Committee

Dr. Laurie McCullough, chair of the Accountability 2.0 subcommittee, provided an SOL Innovation Committee report which included recommendations from that committee regarding the Report Card re-design as well as the Board's accountability system. She said what she would share would probably not be new, but it might be helpful to put it in a condensed package. The subcommittee was convened in January and given a six-month timeline to make some initial recommendations to the Innovation Committee. They chose two areas of focus: school accreditation and the school report card, and a report was submitted to the SOL Innovation Committee on the day of the deadline, June 30. The subcommittee identified two purposes of a school accountability system:

- To assess schools' effectiveness in producing graduates who are prepared for responsible citizenship and success in the world beyond school.
- To leverage support for school improvement efforts.

In its report, the subcommittee provided the following recommendations:

- Multiple measures included in the Accreditation Ratings – Academic success at the school level should be represented by both student achievement and student growth measures. Graduation rates, attendance, and school climate should also be essential components.
- Single accreditation ratings – Sanctions based solely on test results should be eliminated and accreditation should exist as a single designation rather than a ranking system.
- School Report Cards/School Profile – They have stopped using the term School Report Card and are recommending that selected descriptive elements be used that are clear and easy for people to understand.

She concluded by saying she cannot speak for the subcommittee regarding what it will do next. However, there is an Innovation Committee meeting next week and that may come out of that meeting. She knows that there will be a recommendation to have a series of joint meetings between the Accountability Subcommittee and the Assessment Subcommittee so they can look at the assessment model that the Assessment Subcommittee is working on and her subcommittee's recommendations and how these support each other. In addition, she said they would like to have more discussion regarding some of the projects currently in the pipeline and whether they can time their recommendations to comport with these projects.

Board members provided the following questions and comments:

- A Board member asked how the graduation rates in the recommendations would be used. She said graduation rates in their recommendations are a school-level data point and not teacher by teacher. They are currently part of the accreditation system and would continue as they are regarded now.
- Another Board member said the School Profile really does convey a different sort of message than a School Report Card. However, federal requirements call for the inclusion of different demographic groups (subgroups). Are they asking that this be continued? She replied that that term has a negative connotation. For that reason, they have discussed some alternatives. However, they are aware of the federal requirements. She is willing to discuss that issue with her group. It might be helpful if the federal requirements allow the states to use the term reporting groups. The Board member also asked for assistance in determining how the schools prepare the students for life outside of school, how this can be communicated to parents, and how this can be addressed in the School Profile.
- Another Board member complimented her inclusion of school climate. The Board member said, when we look at schools not accredited in Virginia, there are three things everyone struggles with: lack of parental engagement, lack of alignment between what is taught in the classroom and the standards, and school culture and school leadership. This Board member said she is disappointed with the current direction of the School Report Card. She said it lacks context and does not look at it in a profile way and she hopes the General Assembly delays the process so there is an alignment between the work of the Board and the work of the Innovation Committee. She also asked Dr. McCullough what interventions are needed for schools in trouble and if this will be addressed in the next stage of their work. Dr. McCullough said she expects these issues to be addressed. If the Innovation Committee tells the subcommittee that its work will continue, that would be one of the topics studied in more depth.

Discussion of *Regulations Establishing the Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia: Preliminary Concepts for Comprehensive Review*

Discussion of Selected Concepts Presented September 9, 2015:
Definition and Framework for the Life-long, Career-Ready Individual
Graduation Competencies

Dr. Cynthia A. Cave, assistant superintendent for policy and communications at the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), introduced the speakers for this presentation: Dr. Billy Haun, chief academic officer for the VDOE, and Shelley Loving-Ryder, assistant superintendent for assessment and school improvement (VDOE).

Dr. Haun began his presentation by providing a brief overview of what we want our graduates to look like. He said the domains provided by Newport News (Heritage High School) and Salem during today's meeting also comport with what has been put together by the department. Thus, he said he believes that we are taking the right steps to build that profile. Some of the information provided today has been presented previously, but he said he tried to go through and build a profile of what we want our graduates to look like coming out of Virginia's public schools. In conclusion, he went through the slides which outlined the objectives and domains, summarized common themes that he had heard in the earlier innovative grant presentations, and discussed the four domains, expectations, and experiences and the potential impact on the SOA revisions.

Dr. Staples then said Dr. Haun has given the Board the next step. They started out with the idea of high school graduation as reflecting competencies and not credits and that was also heard from several of the presenters who represented the innovation grantees earlier in the meeting. He said the titles for the four domains are really placeholders and may not be the final titles. However, we are beginning to see a series of competencies. He asked the Board if there was enough support for this to commit staff time to come back with details about the competencies needed.

Board members made comments and asked questions:

- A Board member said we need to be able to identify what children are expected to know and expected to do, and, as we move forward with the revisions to the SOL, we move to a mechanism to identify those types of competencies so that school divisions who do not have the resources can have something ready. In addition, if the department has responsibility here, then they can tell school divisions that this is what they will measure against.
- This Board member asked how this will interplay with what colleges are looking for. She said, as we pursue this, we need to be having significant conversations with colleges to ensure that we are all on the same page. Dr. Haun said this really fits very well with career pathways and with the measures which will come last as everything else will be decided first.
- Another Board member said this is very much in keeping with the direction the Board wants to go. She also mentioned community engagement and citizenship and said there are many ways to assist students in practicing citizenship as there are many ways we can teach children of all ages about this topic.
- A Board member said this is the direction we need to follow. She said six to eight years ago certain leaders in education were talking about competency-based education. Virginia now has the right leadership in place and the right climate to engage in this conversation. She believes this requires the Board to

think about the sequence of the work. This will drive testing, accreditation, and the School Report Card/School Profile. She believes the Board needs to advise the General Assembly that the course set needs to be revised based on current conversations and needs and help is needed to do so. Or because there are only so many resources at the department – here are the things that have the greatest utility for Virginians; can they could spend their time and energy there? She said this is a conversation the Board and Dr. Staples should have.

- A Board member said the Board has a charge, but it also has to be careful not to lengthen the list of things to be done. The more added – the more complicated the process becomes. He said they have to determine what should be part of the accountability system and he is not certain they can wait for the Board retreat in April. He said he also believes they need to narrow the things they need to do and begin to create a framework for the accountability system and what it is designed to do moving forward. He is going to ask that when they talk about the agenda moving forward, they start early to consider what the accountability system and the emerging comprehensive plan should look like because those elements will guide the work. He said he hopes the competency discussion will include not just the department and the Board, but also other stakeholders.
- A Board member asked how they could continue to move forward. Some of the things mentioned cannot be done under the current system, but there are others that people would like done sooner. She asked what needs to be done now and indicated that she believes they need to take a tiered approach.
- A Board member said, as a parent, it would be so helpful to be able to check off competencies. Then she would know better how to help her child with school and what he needs.

Dr. Haun responded by saying they have some planning to do.

Shelley Loving-Ryder, assistant superintendent for student assessment and school improvement (VDOE) said she would follow-up Dr. Haun's presentation with comments and with questions the Board previously had about what is called the medium-level concepts. She said one thing they might want to consider in the short-term is competencies that are subject-specific. In the long-term, they might want to look at the true skills students need to be successful in career and in institutions of higher education. She said we often hear from those in higher education who say that they want students to have taken Algebra II, but what is it that makes it important? What is it about English that students need to know to be successful?

She then followed up with issues the Board members had raised previously:

- Possible expansion of a school division's authority for locally awarded verified credits (8VCAC20-131-110 of the SOA).
- Board-adopted guidance.
- Possible changes in this policy.
- Current Board guidance on expedited re-take criteria and potential changes.

The Board members raised the following questions:

- A Board member said locally awarded verified credit appears almost onerous with the panel and other requirements. He asked if many school divisions awarded these verified credits, but she did not have that data. She said there are divisions who use the locally awarded credit to help students graduate.
- A Board member asked why the locally awarded verified credit was limited to the two subject matters: science and history/social science. Would it be expanded to more subject areas or to the advanced studies diploma? Ms. Loving-Ryder said it could be either. Dr. Staples also commented. He mentioned a student who attended the Albemarle session of the Governor's Roundtable. This student was not able to pass the reading examination in English because her language skills were not strong enough yet. Should there be another way to permit the local school division to allow her to demonstrate proficiency so she can graduate?
- A Board member said what might help is clarification of what the competencies are at the end. Then they might be able to give greater guidance to local school divisions regarding the core of a locally developed assessment.
- Another Board member agreed with what had been said and said she thought the locally awarded verified credit should be expanded to math and language arts.

Ms. Loving-Ryder said last year the SOL Innovation Committee recommended that the locally awarded credit be expanded.

She then began to discuss credit accommodations for students with disabilities (8VAC20-131-5 and 8VAC20-131-50 of the SOA) and expedited re-takes. Legislation passed several years ago required the Board to come up with accommodations to help students with disabilities earn a standard diploma. Credit accommodations for students with disabilities were developed to expand the options to include reading, writing, and mathematics, in addition to science and history, if the students met the guidance criteria. Both parents and school division staff have asked that the Board consider expansion of the expedited re-take scaled score range for students with disabilities who are pursuing a Standard Diploma. A Board member said she agreed. She did not think further discussion was needed.

Ms. Loving-Ryder also discussed paired schools. Currently, for the purpose of state accreditation, schools which do not house a grade or offer courses for which SOL tests or additional tests are approved are paired with other schools which do. The question is should the Board permit these schools to submit an alternative accreditation plan for approval as another option for these schools. A Board member said combining these scores from pairing of schools may not always be advantageous. It might make sense to allow the school division to decide which route it would like to pursue in these cases. Moreover, there might be other configurations that the Board might want to consider. In response to a Board member's question, Ms. Loving-Ryder explained what a paired school is. Another Board member said it would seem that there is a reason that K-2 is not tested. To force them into such a configuration could be seen as arbitrary. She said maybe they could be more creative in looking at such a school with other indicators, such as attendance, climate, parental engagement, and attendance. Ms. Loving-Ryder said, if that change was made, that the local school board would come

before the Board with a plan so it would provide some flexibility. Another Board member said this would give the Board a better idea of what is actually happening in the school. Another Board member said that the local board should come with some evidence that speaks to how they know students are prepared for the receiving school. Ms. Loving-Ryder said they could take some of the guidance for specialty schools and modify it. Finally, a Board member questioned whether this process should be necessary for local boards with these small schools. She asked whether this would be a local burden on the school division. Another Board member said he would assume that they are still doing benchmark testing. At his school they know where the K-2 students are because of the continuous assessments. Ms. Loving-Ryder said she thought this request came in initially for schools that did not want to be paired with feeder schools, but wanted to be accredited on their own merits.

Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:34 p.m.

DRAFT