

**MINUTES**  
**Virginia Board of Education**  
**Committee on School and Division Accountability**  
**Wednesday, January 27, 2016**  
**2:15 p.m.**  
**Jefferson Conference Room, James Monroe Building**  
**101. N. 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Richmond VA 23219**

**Welcome and Opening Comments**

Mrs. Diane T. Atkinson, committee chair, called the meeting to order at 2:15 p.m. with the following members present: Dr. Billy K. Cannaday, Jr., Mr. James Dillard, Mrs. Joan E. Wodiska, Mr. Sal Romero, Jr., Dr. Oktay Baysal, Mrs. Elizabeth Lodal, and Mr. Daniel Gecker. Dr. Stephen R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction, was also present.

Mrs. Atkinson noted that Mrs. Darla Edwards was unable to attend the meeting, and she welcomed new member Daniel Gecker.

She noted the focus of the meeting was to continue discussions related to the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*, and the Board's responsibility to approve requests for partially accredited reconstituted schools as well as a discussion of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for a school denied accreditation.

**Approval of Minutes of the November 18, 2015, Committee Meeting**

Dr. Baysal made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2015, meeting of the committee on school and division accountability. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Wodiska and carried unanimously. Copies of the minutes had been distributed in advance of the meeting.

**Public Comment**

Mrs. Atkinson opened the floor to individuals wishing to address the committee. There were no speakers during the public comment period.

**Discussion of Challenges for English Language Learners in Earning a Virginia Diploma**

A presentation was given by Corey Alder, Coordinator for English Language Learner Programs, Roanoke City Public Schools; Rusty Carlock, English Speakers of Other Languages and International Program Coordinator, Albemarle County Public Schools; Teresa Vignaroli, English Language Learner Supervisor, Loudoun County Public Schools; and Deana Otwell, Coordinator of English as a Second Language Services, Chesapeake City Public Schools. The [presentation](#) is available on the committee's webpage.

The challenges noted in the presentation included:

- End-of-Course Reading test and Writing test
- Pressure to work for family income
- Individual perception of failure
- Insufficient time to develop full English proficiency before aging-out
- Little to no English proficiency

- Limited or interrupted formal education
- Testing accommodations that may not align to linguistic need, and may not allow students to demonstrate content knowledge
- Limited/interrupted education in native language
- Lack of transferable credits
- Courses taken in native homeschools not in alignment with courses in US schools
- Lack of credit for English as a Second Language instruction
- Lack of confidence and self-esteem

Questions and discussion from committee members included:

- Mrs. Lodal expressed her appreciation for the work of Mr. Allder, Mr. Carlock, Ms. Vignaroli, and Ms. Otwell. She also expressed appreciation to Sofi, a student who addressed the committee during the presentation. Mrs. Lodal reiterated her desire to consider revisions to graduation requirements and alternative ways to reward students.
- Mr. Dillard asked about the content of the SOL reading test. Dr. Sarah Susbury, director of test administration, scoring, and reporting, indicated the test involves fiction and nonfiction literature and vocabulary, and measures knowledge of elements of literature.
- Mr. Gecker asked the panel presenters what they would change. The panel indicated there needs to be a host of ways to meet the needs of students, including an alternative assessment for the SOL reading test, and extending the “newcomer” exemption longer. Mrs. Atkinson noted that the Board will consider the *ACT WorkKeys Reading for Information Test* as a substitute for the SOL reading test.
- Dr. Cannaday thanked Sofi for sharing her story, and asked the presenters about ways the state can certify that students are successful beyond school. It was noted that the SOL reading test is a barrier to obtaining a diploma, which is a barrier to obtaining a job or pursuing further education.
- Dr. Staples asked about the difference between earning a credential and passing the SOL reading test. Mr. Carlock noted that credentialing is through the tech center and has a closer connection between content in the classroom and applied skills.
- Dr. Baysal asked about collaboration with institutions of higher education. Ms. Otwell noted a partnership between Chesapeake and Regent University, and Ms. Vignaroli noted a partnership between Loudoun and George Mason University.
- Mr. Romero thanked the presenters and Sofi for their comments. Mr. Romero noted his personal struggles learning reading and writing as an immigrant. He also noted the large population of English Language Learners in Harrisonburg and the sense of frustration and lack of confidence many feel about testing. Mr. Romero reiterated his support of an alternative assessment.

### **Discussion of Graduation Concepts**

Dr. Billy Haun, Chief Academic Officer, and Dr. Cynthia Cave, Assistant Superintendent for Policy and Communications, presented this topic. Their [presentation](#) is available on the committee’s webpage.

Dr. Haun described a “Virginia Diploma” with 26 standard credits, 4 verified credits, and credentials through applied knowledge and skills. Dr. Staples reiterated that when considering the proposal, “credit” is not always tied to a year-long course.

Questions and discussion from committee members included:

- Mrs. Atkinson expressed excitement about the proposal. She asked about the capacity at the school level to provide students and families with the counseling they will need. She also noted that the Board should be sensitive to not tracking students and that students should be the determiner of where they want to go. She noted that every student needs skills, not just those going into the workforce.
- Dr. Baysal expressed appreciation for the proposal. He noted that multiple paths are available for students and the Board needs to define the outcomes and objectives for students obtaining a diploma.
- Mrs. Wodiska asked Department staff to be bolder. She expressed support for inquiry based learning and self-guided discovery. She advocated for fewer standard credits, more verified credits, and to maintain an advanced diploma. She indicated industry credentials and internships or independent study should count towards a diploma, and the proposal should include more information about the cultivation across disciplines.
- Mrs. Lodal expressed appreciation to Department staff and indicated there are many schools, such as Governor's schools, doing similar things already.
- Dr. Cannaday advocated for one diploma and market-based credentialing.
- Mr. Dillard indicated he would like more discussion of verified credits. He also suggested adding civic readiness to "college and career ready."
- Mrs. Lodal echoed Mrs. Atkinson's concerns about tracking students, and noted that the skills indicated should apply to all students. She indicated she would like to see a broadening of the "gifted" label at the elementary and middle school level.
- Dr. Staples explained how Department staff compared the current diploma requirements to preparation for STEM related fields.
- Dr. Cannaday emphasized the life-long aspect of learning.
- Dr. Baysal echoed his support of life-long learning as an objective.
- Mrs. Atkinson reiterated the need to examine the implications of these changes at lower grades (trainings and resources).
- Mr. Gecker asked the Board how it ensures that those students who are failing under the current system will not equally fail under a new system. Mrs. Atkinson noted this is one of the most important aspects of what the Board will do. Mr. Gecker implored the Board to make sure any changes have a meaningful impact on the students and schools who are struggling now.
- Dr. Cannaday reiterated that a new system should engage those not engaged now.
- Mrs. Lodal and Mr. Dillard noted the impact of resources. Mr. Gecker noted the impact of personnel.
- Dr. Staples summarized the Board's discussion. He indicated there is interest in stacking credentials as credits, and applying applied skills to diploma requirements through internships, community service, etc. He asked the Board about increasing the number of credits for all students, the number of diplomas, and the number of verified credits and how they are verified.
- Mrs. Wodiska asked for information about what other states and countries are doing in this area.

- Mrs. Atkinson noted that the Board needs to have continued conversations on verified credits in the context of credentialing. The state will still need to test students and report the results.

**Discussion of Requests for Continued Rating of *Partially Accredited: Reconstituted School* from Seven School Divisions and Discussion of Memorandum of Understanding as Required of Schools in Accreditation Denied Status for Newport News City Public Schools**  
 Beverly Rabil, Director for School Improvement, presented this item. Her presentation included:

*The Regulations Establishing the Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (8 VAC 20-131-300.C) state that a school shall be rated *Accreditation Denied* based on its academic performance and its failure to achieve the minimum threshold for the graduation and completion index required to be rated *Fully Accredited* or *Provisionally Accredited-Graduation Rate*, for the preceding three consecutive years or for three consecutive years anytime thereafter.

As outlined in 8 VAC 20-131-315, as an alternative to the Memorandum of Understanding required for schools rated *Accreditation Denied*, a local school board may choose to reconstitute the school and apply to the Board of Education for a rating of *Partially Accredited: Reconstituted School*. The application shall include specific responses that address all areas of deficiency that resulted in the *Accreditation Denied* status.

If a local school board chooses to reconstitute a school, it may annually apply for an accreditation rating of *Partially Accredited: Reconstituted School* as provided for in 8 VAC 20-131-300.C.5. The *Partially Accredited: Reconstituted School* rating may be granted for a period not to exceed three years if the school is making progress toward a rating of *Fully Accredited* in accordance with the terms of the Board of Education’s approval of the reconstitution application. The school will revert to a status of *Accreditation Denied* if it fails to meet the requirements to be rated *Fully Accredited* by the end of the three-year term or if it fails to have its annual application for such rating renewed.

The following nine schools were granted a rating of *Conditionally Accredited* for the 2014-2015 school year and are seeking continuation of this status by requesting a rating of *Partially Accredited: Reconstituted School*.

<b>Name of Division</b>	<b>Name of School Requesting Rating of <i>Partially Accredited: Reconstituted School</i></b>
Dinwiddie County Public Schools	Dinwiddie Middle School
Hampton City Public Schools	Jane H. Bryan Elementary School
Lynchburg City Public Schools	Sandusky Middle School
Norfolk City Public Schools	P. B. Young, Sr. Elementary School (PK-2)
Norfolk City Public Schools	Tidewater Park Elementary School
Petersburg City Public Schools	Vernon Johns Junior High School
Richmond City Public Schools	Thomas C. Boushall Middle School

Richmond City Public Schools      Armstrong High School  
Virginia Beach City Public Schools      Bayside Middle School

Dinwiddie Middle School - Ms. Rabil indicated that the data does not demonstrate progress towards a rating of *Fully Accredited*.

Jane H. Bryan Elementary School - Ms. Rabil indicated that the data does indicate progress towards a rating of *Fully Accredited*.

Sandusky Middle School - Ms. Rabil indicated that the data does indicate progress towards a rating of *Fully Accredited*.

P. B. Young, Sr. Elementary School (PK-2) and Tidewater Park Elementary School (Paired School) - Ms. Rabil indicated that the data does not demonstrate progress towards a rating of *Fully Accredited*.

Vernon Johns Junior High School - Ms. Rabil indicated that the data does not demonstrate progress towards a rating of *Fully Accredited*.

Thomas C. Boushall Middle School - Ms. Rabil indicated that the data does indicate progress towards a rating of *Fully Accredited*.

Armstrong High School - Ms. Rabil indicated that the data does not demonstrate progress towards a rating of *Fully Accredited*.

Bayside Middle School - Ms. Rabil indicated that the data indicates progress towards a rating of *Fully Accredited*.

Based upon 8 VAC 20-131-300.C.5, Willis A. Jenkins Elementary School in Newport News was rated *Conditionally Accredited* for the 2014-2015 school year and will be in *Accreditation Denied* status for the first time in 2015-2016. As a result, the school is subject to actions prescribed by the Virginia Board of Education and affirmed through a Memorandum of Understanding between the VBOE and the local school board.

Questions and discussion from committee members included:

- Mrs. Atkinson asked about why the plans do not reflect the work to be done in new content areas. Ms. Rabil noted that the plans before the Board do not reflect their projected new rating, which will trigger updates to the official plan. However, school divisions have been working proactively with the Office of School Improvement (OSI) to update their plans before the Board's action. Revisions to the essential actions will be reflected in their official plan when their status is confirmed.
- Mrs. Wodiska expressed appreciation for the inclusion of information about staffing and school culture. She asked if the plans are on the new template provided by the Department. Ms. Rabil clarified that the documents before the Board are based on the plans approved last year, and thus are not on the new template.

- Dr. Cannaday asked about what the Office of School Improvement has learned from those school divisions who made large leaps in achievement. Ms. Rabil indicated that OSI staff are visiting selected divisions and conducting on-the-ground interviews. Staff is still compiling data, which will be shared with the Board at the February meeting.
- Mr. Romero asked about who is involved from the school in those OSI visits. Ms. Rabil noted the visits include administrators and teachers.
- Mr. Gecker asked about data related to improvement for schools in reconstituted status versus schools in denied status. Ms. Rabil indicated that the Department collects and evaluates a lot of data, and many of the schools in denied status are making huge progress. Mr. Gecker asked about what is mandated differently for those schools in reconstituted status versus schools in denied status. Ms. Rabil indicated that reconstituted is not a voluntary status, and that schools sign an agreement with the Superintendent of Public Instruction, meet face-to-face with OSI three times a year, and have essential actions that are evidenced based. For schools in denied status, Ms. Rabil noted that OSI performs asset mapping, the local school board is required to undergo training through the Virginia School Boards Association, and data is collected and analyzed quarterly. Dr. Staples noted that the Department is more directive with schools in denied status, and schools in conditional status have a bit more flexibility. Mr. Gecker noted that if the data demonstrates an earlier, more directive intervention leads to better results, why doesn't the Department intervene earlier with schools in reconstituted status. Dr. Staples noted the capacity of the Department, the authority of the Board, and Virginia's shared governance model. Mrs. Wodiska noted that the Board is developing a hybrid model where schools can get help before they are in serious trouble.
- Mr. Dillard asked about staffing levels in the Office of School Improvement. Ms. Rabil noted that OSI serves 111 school divisions with 11 positions. There are seven positions in the field full-time.
- Mrs. Atkinson noted the changes to how the state labels schools in its accreditation system, and how those changes impact the assistance provided by the Department.

The meeting adjourned at 5:08 p.m.