

DRAFT MINUTES
Virginia Board of Education
Committee on School and Division Accountability
Wednesday, June 22, 2016
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 June 22, 2016 Committee on School and Division Accountability meeting: Diane Atkinson; Dr. Billy Cannaday, Jr.; James Dillard; Daniel A. Gecker; Elizabeth Lodal; Joan Wodiska; and Sal Romero, Jr. Dr. Steven Staples, the superintendent of public instruction, was also present. Dr. Oktay Baysal and Wesley J. Bellamy were absent.

Mrs. Atkinson, chairman of this committee, convened the meeting and welcomed the Board members and guests. As part of her introductory remarks, she said today's meeting would focus on the "Profile of a Graduate."

Approval of the Minutes from the May 24, 2016 Committee Meeting

Mrs. Atkinson said the minutes from the May 24, 2016 committee meeting were posted on-line and provided to Board members. Mrs. Atkinson made one edit to correct the name of a person. Mrs. Lodal made a motion to approve the minutes. Dr. Cannaday seconded the motion, and the minutes from the May 24, 2016 committee were approved unanimously, with Mr. Romero abstaining.

Public Comment

Mrs. Atkinson indicated that two individuals had signed up to speak for public comment. However, neither individual was present when called. Mrs. Atkinson moved forward with the business of the meeting, noting that the individuals who signed up would possibly be given another chance to speak later in the meeting, if time allowed.

Presentation from the Virginia School Board Association's Task Force on Workforce Readiness

This presentation, provided by the Virginia School Board Association (VSBA), can be found here: [VSBA Task Force on Workforce Readiness Brief](#). Presenters from the Task Force included:

- William Kidd, VSBA president and Wythe County school board member
- Dr. Tom Brewster, Superintendent for Pulaski County

The task force spent several months putting together a survey on Career & Technical Education (CTE) in Virginia public schools, which they delivered to every superintendent in the state of Virginia. This presentation focused on the information collected from the surveys, which they noted had a high return rate and was proportionately representative of the make up across the state with regard to rural, urban, and suburban divisions.

The first key finding was that all divisions would like more funding to be able to maintain existing CTE programs, implement new programs, and obtain and retain quality staff. The second key finding was that schools would like collaboration with the community, business and industry, the community colleges, and the higher education system. The task force also addressed challenges faced by CTE programs, including finding and retaining qualified staff, support of CTE programs by other groups in the community, and scheduling limitations for students wishing to participate therein. The presenters also discussed support for career planning, including beginning career planning at an early age. They concluded by outlining expectations for Virginia's workforce over the next decade, detailing the task force's next steps, and emphasizing the need to "educate the whole child."

The Board had the following questions and comments:

- One Board member commended the report, and asked for copies of the final report.
- What is the norm in terms of how many periods high schools have in a daily schedule? How could this be applied to flexibility in internships or work programs? Both Dr. Brewster and Mr. Kidd indicated that scheduling is key to collaboration with the community and the ability to advance internship programs or work programs.
- Where is the best place to start? What are the top three things that the Board should consider in redesigning high schools? Because the Board must take action on a revised Standards of Accreditation by November of 2016, identifying priorities is important. This Board member asked for more information from VSBA in order to prepare graduation requirements for 2022.
- Another Board member commended the report, noting that it works towards driving a stronger and more vibrant economy for all Virginians. This Board member asked for more detailed input regarding policy levers that the Board would be able to effect.
- One Board member asked about STEM schools, and the collaboration between schools and local business – what is needed locally, and how are courses adjusted locally to meet those needs?
- Are any localities in Virginia systematically implementing CTE at the elementary school level?
- Mr. Kidd discussed partnerships and collaboration, citing groups like Virginia Partnership for Out of School Time (VPOST) and their focus on workforce readiness.

- One Board member discussed soft skills and “charm courses” that teach students how to shake hands, maintain contact, dress appropriately, and be punctual. It was discussed that such skills could possibly be taught with volunteers from community or outreach organizations. Dr. Brewster identified community nonprofits, such as Big Brother Big Sister, as potential partners in this area.

Board members thanked Mr. Kidd, Dr. Brewster, and VSBA for the information provided in the presentation and report.

Public Comment

Mrs. Atkinson stated that there was sufficient time to allow for public comment by the two individuals who had signed up in advance, but had been absent at the beginning of the meeting.

- Sandra Brooks spoke in favor of prayer.
- Rudy Smith, of the Virginia Foreign Language Supervisors Association, spoke in favor of including world language studies as a core component of the new profile of a Virginia graduate.

Trends in High School Graduation Requirements Among States with High Postsecondary Success

Mrs. Atkinson indicated that this presentation is responsive to issues raised during the Board’s retreat on May 25, 2016. Dr. Jennifer Piver-Renna, Senior Executive Director for Research at the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), worked with the Education Commission of the States (ECS) to assemble the information presented to the Board. The presentation can be found here, [Trends in High School Graduation Requirements](#).

For the purposes of the presentation, “states with successful postsecondary outcomes” were defined as those having:

- the highest percentage of high school graduates attending a postsecondary institution in their home state (including 2- and 4-year, public and private), and
- postsecondary graduation rates higher than 50 percent.

Dr. Piver-Renna presented detailed data on graduation requirements in the ten states that met the criteria of successful postsecondary outcomes. The following key points were made during the presentation:

- Credit requirements, and the ways in which students earn credits, vary across different states.

- When making changes to graduation requirements, states most commonly have amended the credits required within a subject area, rather than changing diploma options. However, some states have changed diploma options—in those instances, most have moved from multiple diplomas to a single diploma. Research data from the states that have changed diplomas is not available yet, as the changes are too recent.
- There is no correlation between state-set high school graduation requirements and completion rates at postsecondary institutions.

The Board had the following questions and comments:

- Where the state sets a minimum and localities are permitted to add additional requirements, are those set at the district level, or are students able to select those additional requirements themselves? Dr. Piver-Renna answered that in California and Wisconsin, the states that allowed for this, the districts define the additional requirements
- Maryland is generally one of Virginia's benchmark states, how close was Maryland to making the top-ten in this research? Dr. Piver-Renna stated that Maryland has an overall postsecondary graduation rate of 45 percent, which was just below their cut-off of 50 percent.
- One Board member noted that the states used in the research are states with a good correlation between the K-12 system and their higher education system. What are the policies that connect the K-12 system to the postsecondary system in these states?
- The state of Wisconsin was discussed, as being the highest in some areas, but lower in others. California was discussed for having the lowest statewide requirements, and being an outlier in many ways. It was noted that California and Wisconsin each offer two diplomas.
- The research presented was for the minimum state requirements, and would therefore align only with Virginia's Standard Diploma. Would it be possible to get information correlated with the Advanced Diploma, as that is the option that most frequently leads to postsecondary education?
- Would it be possible to get the NAEP scores and rankings?
- One Board member commended the research for bringing the Board national data to use in forming the Profile of a Graduate.
- Which of the states have state-aligned systems for higher education? Which have the independent structure, like Virginia? The Board was interested in determining the impact of these systems. This data could help affect what the Board prioritizes when making changes.

- Is there research that explains the lack of completion for postsecondary education? Why is the postsecondary completion rate so low, and how can that be remedied?
- One Board member inquired about credits in the arts, credits in foreign language, and credits in CTE.
- Dr. Piver-Renna noted that the research used a 6-year graduation rate, as opposed to a 4- or 5-year rate; and, the data was from year 2013-14.

Progress Report on the Board’s Development of Profile of a Graduate

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) presented a progress report, which can be found here: [Profile of a Graduate Presentation](#). Mrs. Atkinson introduced the presenters of this information, which included:

- Susan B. Williams, Director of Policy for VDOE
- Lolita Hall, Director of Career & Technical Education for VDOE
- Joseph Wharff, School Counseling Specialist for VDOE

The following topics and questions were discussed:

- If 70 percent of graduates enroll in a 4-year institution, why do only 38 percent graduate within four years? Is the problem financial? Are some of these students graduating in five years, or six years?
 - One Board member proposed that there may be positive reasons students are choosing to stay for more than four years – like taking additional courses, or adding a vocation or workplace skill, in order to make themselves more marketable after graduation.
 - It was also noted that the 6-year graduation rate is 58 percent in Virginia.
- One Board member voiced concern that workplace readiness is not given the same amount of focus as college readiness.
- There was discussion of why changes are being made to the Profile of a Graduate – information from workforce leaders, the SOL Innovation Committee, the Virginia General Assembly, and the Governor were cited as key factors.
 - One Board member emphasized that the main reason for making changes is for the students themselves.
- Workforce readiness was discussed. Board members agreed that the phrase “workforce readiness” does not encompass readiness for college and the military, and all forms of readiness should be given equal weight. Some Board members preferred the term “life readiness” as more universal and all-encompassing.
- Melissa Luchau, Director of Board Relations for VDOE, presented updates on the infographics being used to disseminate information on the Profile of a Graduate. The

Board discussed wording and technical amendments to the slides, as well as some editing.

- The Board discussed the number of possible required mathematics credits as a proposal for graduation requirements. Several Board members voiced concern about the shortage of math teachers in the Commonwealth.
- One Board member voiced concern about continuing to push standards up, and alienating the kids at the bottom—possibly exacerbating incompleteness rates.
- A question was raised about the intended audience for the current briefing. Was it for the Board only? Or will it be disseminated to the public? Board members discussed how to pare down the presentation and make it clearer, in order to be able to share it with the public.
- Several Board members discussed locally awarded verified credit and how to best present information on that topic to the public, without creating unnecessary confusion.
- One Board member asked about career exposure and exploration at the elementary school level, and what type of exposure is appropriate at that level.
- One Board member discussed concern for missing the “big picture ideas” among the specific proposals. These ideas were identified as:
 - the importance of counseling,
 - utilizing data to make decisions, and
 - the local capacity and context of localities.
- One Board member asked that the Board focus on what will be shared with the public for feedback at the public hearings being held throughout Virginia this summer. The Board then discussed what they would like to present to the public.
- One Board member voiced concern about moving towards one diploma, and questioned the rationale behind that idea. This Board member wished to add this information to the presentation given to the public.
- One Board member suggested that the following be taken and presented at the public hearings:
 - the Venn diagram
 - the chart with the 5 C’s listed and expanded upon, and
 - the four areas in which consensus was reached at the Board’s retreat.
- A discussion took place as to whether or not a reference document was needed in addition to the three items suggested, and what level of detail is needed to get the new Profile of a Graduate across to the general public.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:42pm.

DRAFT