

DRAFT MINUTES
Virginia Board of Education
Standing Committee on School and Division Accountability
Wednesday, October 26, 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 October 26, 2016 meeting of the Committee on School and Division Accountability: Diane Atkinson; Dr. Oktay Baysal; Wesley J. Bellamy; 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.

Ms. Atkinson, chairman of this committee, convened the meeting at 1:00pm.

Approval of the Minutes from the September 21, 2016 Committee Meeting

Ms. Lodal made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 21, 2016 committee meeting. Dr. Baysal seconded the motion, and the draft minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comment

Sarah Finley spoke on behalf of the Virginia Council of Economic Education in support of ensuring that social studies is taught in each classroom in alignment with Virginia's social studies Standards of Learning.

Presentations

Beverly Rabil, Director of School Improvement for the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), presented the Board with a "heat" map and data table that provides an analysis of the accreditation status of schools in Virginia, according to geographic regions of the state as represented by Superintendents' region.

[Map of Current Accreditation Status and Discussion of Data Analysis of All Schools Not Fully Accredited](#)

[Data Analysis of All Schools Not Fully Accredited](#)

The Board had the following comments and questions:

- One Board member suggested adding student populations on the spreadsheet table, and also including a summary by region. A summary table should be added to the map that would provide regional statistics and populations.

- A Board member suggested that, rather than showing areas where more than fifty percent of schools are not accredited, staff should look at the data in the positive—where more than fifty percent of schools are accredited.
- Staff should analyze and provide data sets that are inter-connected to inform the Board in their six-year plan development.
- The Board discussed which data correlates should be examined in conjunction with the accreditation map. Some of the correlates suggested were: attendance, vacancies, leadership turnover, and degree of local financial commitment.
- There is a pattern of low performance with the English Standards of Learning (SOL) test in elementary and middle schools. High schools are typically performing better on English SOL tests. What is being done differently at the high schools?
 - Dr. Staples highlighted several possible factors, including the delivery and implementation of the standards, the shift from fiction to nonfiction, and the higher requirement of seventy-five percent for the English SOL.
- One Board member suggested that accreditation should be based on data collected over several years, not just data from one year.

Dr. Jennifer Piver-Renna, Senior Executive Director for Research for VDOE, presented an update to the Board on the Accreditation Matrix, providing an example of using benchmarks for a school quality measure, chronic absenteeism.

[Update on Accreditation Matrix](#)

The Board had the following comments and questions:

- One Board member requested that the data on the matrix be more clearly labeled to make the information easier to understand.
- The consistent use of data that is correlated to student performance, within the context of Virginia’s conditions, will lead to ongoing improvement. The use of this data will shift the paradigm of how the Board makes policy and informs policy.
- One Board member suggested that the matrix should be a part of the broader system of accountability, instead of accreditation.
- Chronic illness and internships should be accounted for in the definition of attendance for calculating chronic absenteeism.

- A Board member asked why the matrix would be an accountability measure, rather than being used to help underperforming schools? The correlations that have been demonstrated in this matrix provide a clear starting point. If issues like chronic absenteeism cause SOL test scores to go down, then why would this be used to determine accreditation, rather than just being identified as a factor to examine in schools that are not accredited?
- One Board member suggested that accreditation ought to measure output factors. The accreditation system should be correlated with longtime student success. Chronic absenteeism is an input factor.
 - Dr. Staples stated that the Board must decide whether accreditation is a process or an end product. If accreditation is a process, then it forces schools to look at their data introspectively and see how they can improve. If accreditation is an end point, then the Board may not want to include factors like chronic absenteeism.

Dr. Cynthia Cave, Assistant Superintendent for Policy and Communications for VDOE, presented an update to the Board on proposed amendments to the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia, Parts I-VII*.

[Update on Proposed Amendments to the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia, Parts I-VII \(Proposed Stage\)](#)

The Board had the following comments and questions:

- Career exploration was discussed. Would the proposed required course in middle school be designated as a “career exploration course”? One Board member expressed support for making career exploration a part of every course, rather than adding this one class as a requirement.
 - Dr. Cave responded that this course, which would be taken in 7th grade, is currently offered as a career investigation elective.
- Career exploration should be an ongoing process that is an interdisciplinary activity.
- One Board member asked staff to compile data on how many students are currently enrolled in designated “career exploration” elective classes.
- The Board discussed the requirement that local school divisions have a policy for notifying parents when students’ instructional materials contain sexually explicit material. Is this a notification requirement for the regulations governing local school divisions?

- Dr. Cave cited a survey of local school divisions from 2013, where ninety-eight percent stated they had policies related to the selection and utilization of instructional materials. However, the definition of “controversial” or “sensitive” varied, as did the process and timeline of the notification varied. Approximately half of the local school divisions required parents to receive advanced notice.
- Discussion of the pending revisions to Parts I-VII of the Standards of Accreditation included clarification of the two distinct ways locally awarded verified credits could be earned by students. Locally awarded verified credits can be based on Board established criteria affecting those students who have failed an end-of-course in an academic subject twice by a designated margin. Students may also receive locally awarded verified credit in history and social sciences by demonstrating mastery of the content on locally developed authentic performance assessments.

Beverly Rabil, Director of School Improvement for VDOE, lead the Board in a discussion of school improvement items on the Board’s agenda for the October 27, 2016 Board meeting.

[Board Meeting Agenda for October 27, 2016](#)

The Board had the following comments and questions:

- One Board member noted that the Board gains confidence that a school is worthy of their accreditation rating by showing continuous growth and meeting certain benchmarks.
- When evaluating the accreditation ratings of schools, the Board should determine what has been done to ensure success, how early were the schools able to detect the issues, and at what point did they try to intervene.
- The process of moving towards full accreditation should be seen as an opportunity for improvement. The state needs to be in partnership with local school divisions in helping to get schools to full accreditation.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.