



VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

AGENDA ITEM

Agenda Item: H

Date: October 20, 2022

Title: First Review of a Proposal to Adopt Special Provisions Regarding the Determination of the Performance Level for the Chronic Absenteeism Indicator in Accreditation Years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025

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Purpose of Presentation:

Action required by state or federal law or regulation

Executive Summary:

The *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (SOA) at [8VAC20-131-380 F 3](#) states the following:

The board may adopt special provisions related to the measurement and use of a school quality indicator as prescribed by the board. The board may also alter the inclusions and exclusions from the performance level calculations by providing adequate notice to local school boards.

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) requests that the Virginia Board of Education (Board) adopt special provisions to temporarily alter the manner in which the performance level assigned to the chronic absenteeism rate for each school is determined in accountability years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025¹. Specifically, the VDOE is asking the Board to-

- remove the 2021-2022 school year chronic absenteeism data from accreditation calculations in accountability year 2023-2024. This will result in the removal of the cumulative three-year rate and the demonstration of adequate improvement from the determination of a school's performance level for chronic absenteeism in accountability year 2023-2024 (the 2022-2023 school year data, therefore, will be the sole determinant of the chronic absenteeism rate), and
- remove the 2021-2022 school year chronic absenteeism data from the cumulative three-year rate in accountability year 2024-2025, such that the cumulative year rate will

only include data from the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years.

The current performance levels are described in the current SOA ([8VAC20-131-380.F.1.h](#)), and a summary follows:

- For Level One, the performance level is determined by using the best of the current or cumulative three year rate or, by using the current year rate if it is in the Level Two range, and the school demonstrated at least a 10% improvement in the chronic absenteeism rate from the previous year.
- For Level Two, the performance level is determined by using the best of the current or cumulative three year rate or, by using the current year rate if it is in the Level Three range, and the school demonstrated at least a 10% improvement in the chronic absenteeism rate from the previous year.
- For Level Three, the performance level is determined by using the best of the current or cumulative three year rate, or if the school has been a Level Two or Level Three through four consecutive years.

The school year 2021-2022 chronic absenteeism data was negatively impacted by several factors related to the pandemic and was not necessarily a representative indicator of the school's programs and efforts to engage students. Therefore, [the Board adopted special provisions](#) to remove it from the determination of accreditation status in 2022-2023. In doing so, the earned performance level and chronic absenteeism rate was still assigned to, and reported for schools, though it was not considered when assigning an accreditation status (*Accredited* or *Accredited with Conditions*). When the Board approved this special provision, Board members clarified that they were approving a temporary removal of the chronic absenteeism indicator from the determination of accreditation status in 2022-2023, but would later consider how the 2021-2022 school year data would be used in the determination of the performance level for chronic absenteeism in accountability year 2023-2024 and beyond.

Due to the continued impact of the pandemic on chronic absenteeism in the 2021-2022 school year, and the exclusion of this data in the determination of accreditation status in 2022-2023, the VDOE is proposing the exclusion of 2021-2022 school year data from accountability years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025.

This exclusion results in the following:

- Accountability year 2023-2024: The performance level would be based solely on 2022-2023 school year data. Since 2021-2022 data would be excluded, there would not be a previous year to gauge adequate improvement, nor would there be three consecutive years to calculate a three-year rate.

- Accountability year 2024-2025 and beyond: The current SOA regulations will be implemented. Adequate improvement will be calculated using 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 data, and the cumulative “three-year” rate would consist of data from 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 only (2021-2022 would be excluded).

This recommendation is also made with the understanding that the chronic absenteeism indicator may need to be revisited if there are changes to the accreditation system prior to accountability year 2023-2024 that would impact how chronic absenteeism performance is calculated and reported.

It is critical to reiterate the importance of proactively addressing chronic absenteeism at the school level, and to hold schools accountable for this indicator in the accreditation model. To support local school divisions, the Office of School Quality, in conjunction with the Department of Special Education and Student Services, began a year-long collaborative learning cohort for principals and members of their attendance team to engage in a three-part E-learning series facilitated by Attendance Works. Following the E-learning series, principals and attendance team members can participate in in-person sessions and follow-up support webinars. School leaders with level 3 and level 2 performance ratings in Chronic Absenteeism were invited to join the cohort. There was an overwhelming response and we reached capacity for the current cohort. This technical assistance activity is an example of operationalising the guidance, support and resources provided by the VDOE to promote improved policies and practices around school attendance. These initiatives seek to equip local school divisions with the guidance and interventions via training to positively impact student attendance and performance.

Action Requested:

Action will be requested at a future meeting:
November 17, 2022

Superintendent’s Recommendation

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education engage in a discussion about adopting special provisions regarding the determination of performance levels for the chronic absenteeism indicator in accreditation years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025.

Previous Review or Action:

Date: April 21, 2022

Action: The Board adopted special provisions to remove the chronic absenteeism indicator from the determination of accreditation status in accountability year 2022-2023

Background Information and Statutory Authority:

The *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (SOA) at [8VAC20-131-380 F 3](#) established the Board’s authority to adopt special provisions; this section

states the following:

The board may adopt special provisions related to the measurement and use of a school quality indicator as prescribed by the board. The board may also alter the inclusions and exclusions from the performance level calculations by providing adequate notice to local school boards.

[The Board previously adopted special provisions](#) to remove chronic absenteeism from the determination of accreditation status in 2022-2023. In doing so, the earned performance level and chronic absenteeism rate was still assigned to, and reported for schools, though it was not considered when assigning an accreditation status (*Accredited* or *Accredited with Conditions*). When the Board approved this special provision, Board members clarified that they were approving a temporary removal of the chronic absenteeism indicator from the determination of accreditation status in 2022-2023, but would later consider how the 2021-2022 school year data would be used in the determination of the performance level for chronic absenteeism in accountability year 2023-2024 and beyond.

These regulations in the SOA ([8VAC20-131-380.F.1.h](#)) describe how performance levels are determined, so that the Board can compare the proposal to the current regulations.

- For Level One, the performance level is determined by using the best of the current or cumulative three year rate or, by using the current year rate if it is in the Level Two range, and the school demonstrated at least a 10% improvement in the chronic absenteeism rate from the previous year.
- For Level Two, the performance level is determined by using the best of the current or cumulative three year rate or, by using the current year rate if it is in the Level Three range, and the school demonstrated at least a 10% improvement in the chronic absenteeism rate from the previous year.
- For Level Three, the performance level is determined by using the best of the current or cumulative three year rate or, if the school has been a Level Two or Level Three through four consecutive years.

The table demonstrates the proposed changes.

	Accountability Year 2023-2024	Accountability Year 2024-2025
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Level One	The performance level is determined by using the current rate.	The performance level is determined by using the best of the current or cumulative three-year rate* or, by using the current year rate if it is in the Level Two range, and the school demonstrated at least a 10% improvement in the chronic absenteeism rate from the previous year.
Level Two	The performance level is determined by using the current rate.	The performance level is determined by using the best of the current or cumulative three-year rate* or, by using the current year rate if it is in the Level Three range, and the school demonstrated at least a 10% improvement in the chronic absenteeism rate from the previous year.
Level Three	The performance level is determined by using the current rate.	The performance level is determined by using the best of the current or cumulative three-year rate* or, if the school has been a Level Two or Level Three through four consecutive years.

*Indicates the rate will be calculated with data from the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years.

Timetable for Further Review/Action:

It is anticipated that this item will be brought to the Board for final review in November 2022. Following the Board’s decision, the VDOE will alert school divisions to any changes. It is important to let divisions know as soon as possible how their absenteeism rates for this school year will be considered in the accreditation system.

Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:

There are no fiscal or human resource impacts.