| **Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item** | **Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia** |
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# Agenda Item: E

## Date: March 22, 2018

### Title: First Review of the Board of Education’s Guidelines on Exemplar School Recognition as Required by Recognition and Rewards for School and Division Accountability (8VAC20-131-410)

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## Purpose of Presentation:

Action required by Board of Education regulation.

## Executive Summary:

Per 8VAC20-131-410.B, the Board of Education may establish guidelines for the recognition of exemplar performance in schools and divisions. The proposed guidelines identify criteria for three types of recognition: (1) highest achievement, (2) continuous improvement, and (3) innovative practice.

## Action Requested:

Action will be requested at a future meeting. Specify anticipated date below:

April 26, 2018

## Superintendent’s Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education receive for first review the proposed guidelines for the recognition of exemplar schools and divisions.

## Previous Review or Action:

No previous review or action.

## Background Information and Statutory Authority:

The Board of Education’s authority for establishing criteria to recognize schools and divisions for exemplar performance is prescribed in *Regulations Establishing the Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (*8VAC20-131). Section 410.B.* of the regulations states:

B. Schools and divisions may be designated and recognized by the board for exemplar performance in accordance with criteria and guidelines it shall establish for top achievement in one or more school quality indicators, and the board may include recognition for high performing schools in specific peer categories, such as schools with high levels of poverty.

The proposed guidelines establish the criteria for three types of recognition: (1) highest achievement, (2) continuous improvement, and (3) innovative practice.

Schools identified for highest achievement must be rated “Accredited” and demonstrate high levels of success across all of the school quality indicators, including achievement gaps among student groups. To be eligible for this award, schools must meet the state benchmark for reading, math, and science based on the student pass rate (i.e., not including growth or progress) and must have no more than a five percent gap (for schools with two student groups) or a ten percent gap (for schools with three or more student groups) between the lowest performing student group and all other students in the school. In addition, schools must meet the Level One benchmark for all other applicable school quality indicators.

Recognition for continuous improvement values schools that are demonstrating consistent, noteworthy improvement for each of three years. Schools that are rated “Accredited” or “Accredited with Conditions” and meet one of four criteria will be recognized: (1) a reduction in the rate of students failing state assessments in reading, math, and science; (2) a reduction in the rate of students failing state assessments in reading and math for two or more student groups; (3) a reduction in the chronic absenteeism rate; or (4) for schools with a graduating class, an increase in the Graduation and Completion Index and a decrease in the dropout rate.

Recognition for highest achievement and continuous improvement will be awarded annually based on current year data and accreditation status. Schools recognized for highest achievement will not be considered for recognition for continuous improvement in the same year.

Under the proposed criteria for innovative practice recognition, the Board can recognize schools, divisions, or school boards that implement an innovative practice for at least two years which demonstrates a significant impact on student success. The innovative practice must be a new or creative evidence-based alternative to existing instructional or administrative practices in one of the following priority areas: (1) closing achievement gaps; (2) developing an integrated STEM approach to learning; (3) building relationships with families; (4) enhancing technology infrastructure; (5) elevating the quality of the school environment; or (6) retaining quality teachers.

Recognition for innovative practice will be awarded every two years based on an agency-established application process.  
  
Timetable for Further Review/Action:

Final criteria for the identification of exemplar schools will be will be presented to the Board of Education for final review on April 26, 2018.

## Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:

This responsibility for identifying exemplar schools will be absorbed by the agency’s existing resources.

# Attachment A

## 8VAC20-131-410 Recognitions and rewards for school and division accountability

### Exemplar School Recognition

***8VAC20-131-410.B states:***

*B. Schools and divisions may be designated and recognized by the board for exemplar performance in accordance with criteria and guidelines it shall establish for top achievement in one or more school quality indicators, and the board may include recognition for high performing schools in specific peer categories, such as schools with high levels of poverty.*

#### Guidance:

These guidelines establish the Board’s criteria to designate schools that have achieved exemplar performance based upon the school quality indicators used for accreditation. Three categories of exemplar performance will be recognized: (1) Highest achievement, (2) Continuous improvement; and (3) Innovative practice.

#### Highest Achievement

Eligibility for recognition for highest achievement is limited to schools rated “Accredited” during the most current accreditation cycle. Schools that meet *all* of the following criteria will be recognized for highest achievement:

•   School meets state benchmark in reading, math *and* science (75 percent for reading and 70 percent for math and science) based on the current year pass rate on state assessments (not including growth or English Learner progress);

•   All student groups within school meet state benchmark in reading *and* math (75 percent for reading and 70 percent for math) based on the current year pass rate on state assessments (not including growth or English Learner progress), *and*

* For schools with two student groups, there is no more than five percentage points between the lowest performing group and all other students in the school; or
* For schools with three or more student groups, there is no more than ten percentage points between the lowest performing group and all other students in the school

•   School demonstrates current year chronic absenteeism rate of 15 percent or lower.

For schools with a graduating class, two additional criteria apply:

•   School demonstrates current year Graduation and Completion Index of 88 points or higher;

•   School demonstrates current year dropout rate of six percent or lower.

#### Continuous Improvement

Eligibility for recognition for continuous improvement is open to all accreditation-eligible schools that do not receive recognition for high achievement in the same year. Schools rated as “Accredited” or “Accredited with Conditions” and meet *at least one* of the following criteria will be recognized annually for continuous improvement:

* School demonstrates a reduction in the rate of students failing state assessments for math, reading *and* science for each of the past three years, with a total reduction across the three years of 15 percent or more of the first year’s failure rate;
* School demonstrates a reduction in the rate of students failing state assessments for two or more student groups in reading *and* math for each of the past three years, with a total reduction across the three years of 15 percent or more of the first year’s failure rate;
* School demonstrates a decrease in the chronic absenteeism rate for each of the past three years, with a total reduction across the three years of 15 percent or more of the first year’s chronic absenteeism rate;
* School demonstrates an increase in the Graduation and Completion Index (GCI) for each of the past three years, with a total increase across the three years of four percent or more; *and* school demonstrates a decrease in the dropout rate for each of the past three years, with the total reduction across three years of 15 percent or more of the first year’s dropout rate.

#### Innovative Practice

Eligibility for recognition for an innovative practice is open to all accreditation-eligible schools, any school division, and any local school board. Schools, divisions, and school boards will be recognized every two years for innovative practices based upon the following criteria:

* School- or division-wide implementation of a new or creative evidence-based alternative to existing instructional or administrative practices in a defined student population
* Practice must be implemented for at least two full academic years
* Goals and objectives for practice must align with one of the following priority areas:
  + Closing achievement gaps among vulnerable and/or minority student groups
  + Developing an integrated STEM approach to learning
  + Building genuine relationships with families to support overall family well-being and children’s healthy development
  + Enhancing technology infrastructure to increases students access to connected devices and the internet
  + Elevating the quality and character of the school environment so that it the reflects the positive and support norms, goals, and values of the community
  + Retaining high-quality teachers
* Data provided by school or division demonstrates practice is meeting its objectives and is having a significant impact on outcomes for the targeted student population

Innovative practice recognition will be awarded through an agency-established application process. Schools, divisions, or school boards will self-nominate and submit applications to their Regional Superintendent designee. Regional Superintendents will review each application and submit a subset of finalists to the Board for consideration. Board members will rate each application received against a rubric and those scoring above a pre-determined range will be recognized.

Schools, divisions, and school boards recognized in any of the three categories of exemplar performance will be listed in the Superintendent’s Annual Report and on the Virginia Department of Education website. Other incentives may be provided as resources allow.