

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
BOARD OF EDUCATION
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA
March 20, 2020**

Due to the declared state of emergency related to COVID-19, the Board of Education convened electronically via conference call at 1p.m. on Friday, March 20. The purpose of this call was to receive a briefing on COVID-19 and possible future actions needed by the Board. No votes were taken, and it was open to the public for listening. Public comment was not be accepted on the call.

Roll Call of Board Members Present

Mr. Daniel A. Gecker, President
Mrs. Diane Atkinson, Vice President
Ms. Pamela Davis-Vaught
Dr. Francisco Durán
Ms. Anne Holton
Dr. Tammy Mann
Dr. Keisha Pexton
Dr. Jamelle Wilson

Welcome from President Daniel Gecker

Mr. Gecker welcomed Board members and the public to the conference call and stated how the current state of emergency is an unprecedented situation facing our country.

COVID-19 Briefing and VDOE Frequently Asked Questions webpage

Ms. Emily Webb, director of board relations, provided an overview of the COVID-19 briefing document provided to Board members. She stated that the document will be available to the public on the Board's website later in the day.

Ms. Webb stated there are four areas that may require future Board discussion, guidance or action: (1) graduation requirements, 140-clock-hour requirements and waivers; (2) length of school term waivers; (3) SOL assessment requirements; and (4) teacher licensure and student teaching requirements. She reviewed the current statutory and regulatory requirements as well as any Board or Department issued guidance in each area. A copy of the Board of Education COVID-19 briefing is available at <http://doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/2020/boe-covid-19-briefing.docx>.

Mr. Gecker asked if Virginia were to apply for the assessment and accountability waiver, there is an assumption that there would be no SOL assessments this year. Dr. Lane confirmed that the USED waiver would allow for no SOL assessments to be required this year for federal accountability. VDOE staff has been directed to begin preparing Virginia's waiver.

Discussion and Questions from Board Members

Mrs. Atkinson asked the following questions/comments for follow-up after the call:

- Is similar flexibility needed for the adult diploma program?
- There is a one-year exemption for EL students – should this be examined? It is important to think about holding them harmless, as they will not have receive instruction.
- For provisional licenses – in addition to individuals who cannot get assessments in time, it is also important to look at the criteria of the necessary evaluation. Consider an extension for individuals whose provisional licenses will expire before they are able to meet the requirements needed.
- SOQ data collection – Every year, local school boards have to fill out their abilities to meet the SOQs. In answering some of the things they must certify, school divisions may not be able to say that they completed them.

Dr. Lane responded with more information referencing adult diploma and EL exemption will be available in a few weeks. Dr. Lane has provided the governor a briefing on evaluations for provisional license. SOQ compliance report will be discussed at the next meeting. Dr. Lane stated that it would be addressed one by one, still collecting data to get a sense of the magnitude of the issues that were not met within the context of the situation.

Ms. Holton applauded department staff for their hard work during this time. She stated that we should continue to give as much flexibility as possible and focus on meeting the basic needs of students. Additionally, she stated that she hopes that everyone is thinking about equity and expanding internet capacity.

Dr. Wilson asked if any guidance has been issued to local school divisions regarding transcripts. Dr. Lane stated that transcripts are generally completed as outlined in regulations but that this is an issue VDOE is working on to provide more guidance in this situation.

Dr. Durán asked what discussions have been happening with the Office of Attorney General to determine how the Board could meet virtually.

Susan Williams, assistant attorney general, responded that the Office of Attorney General is working on draft guidance for state agencies and boards. Current provisions on virtual meetings are limited to discussion or items directly related to the emergency. It is likely the Board will need to meet electronically but each agenda item will be considered on a case-by-case basis – cannot just do regular business but can do business related to the emergency such as COVID-19. Ms. Webb also stated that it is likely that the Board will need to meet electronically over the next several weeks to take action on emergency items.

Dr. Lane shared that the VDOE team is working around the clock to regularly update the COVID-19 webpage and FAQ webpage. Significant progress has been made on issuing guidance to local school divisions. Currently, he and VDOE staff are meeting with division superintendents twice a week to share updates. There is a strong focus on equity and has seen heroic efforts within all of our school communities.

Ms. Holton asked if the FAQ address equity in internet access. She assumes this will go on at least eight weeks and possibly through the end of the school year. Dr. Lane stated to see question #29. While this is a local school division issue, VDOE is advocating to use this pandemic as a leveraging point to increase internet access and capacity. Access to the internet is just one of the many equity challenges school divisions are facing. Dr. Durán stated there are English Learner equity issues too.

Ms. Holton stated teachers are doing lots of work to push out potential content. Dr. Lane responded that continuity of learning is important for all local divisions.

Dr. Pexton asked if there has been any discussion about resources for parents that are now becoming teachers for their children? Particularly for younger students who aren't as technology savvy as middle and high school students.

Dr. Lane stated that VDOE is working with local school divisions to provide more guidance to parents. The instructional office at VDOE is working with the instructional offices around the state on continuity of learning options. There are several ways to provide continuity of learning and VDOE is hesitant to recommend a specific way as each community is different but the focus remains on equity.

Dr. Mann stated that she would be interested to learn more from other states and their experience to address the needs of our students, specifically California's plan.

Dr. Lane stated that the west coast is ahead of the east coast by a week or two. We plan to learn as much as we can from other states and their experiences.

Regarding school closures, Dr. Wilson asked about the type of programs that may need an exemption to the governor's closure order to open.

Dr. Lane stated one example is resident facilities where students live at the school. Another example is to open a school to provide childcare services for healthcare workers and first responders in communities where there is limited childcare options.

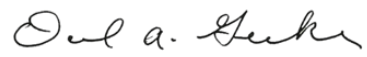
Dr. Mann asked about adding social emotional support resources and mental health resources for those in need. Dr. Lane responded that while nothing has been sent out yet, those would be good resources to add to the COVID-19 webpage and FAQ.

Closing

The Board received brief closing remarks from Holly Coy, deputy secretary of education, regarding need for multifaceted approach the governor is taking to this state of emergency and from Mrs. Williams.

Adjournment of the Conference Call

There being no further business of the Board of Education, Mr. Gecker adjourned the business meeting at 2 p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dan a. Gecker".

Mr. Daniel Gecker, President