

At-Risk Add-On Prescription

The current At-Risk Add-On program is an optional Direct Aid program that does not require school division participation. FY24 state funding for the program is \$350.7 million from the General and Lottery funds. **If a school division chooses to participate in the program and receive an allocation of state funds, the school division must follow the program requirements and provide the required local match based on its Local Composite Index.** In FY23 and FY24, Brunswick County chose to opt out of participating in this program. **All divisions participated in FY20, FY21, and FY22.**

If the At-Risk Add-On program were moved into the Standards of Quality (“SOQ”) by the General Assembly, the program would be funded as an SOQ account, and **division participation would be considered mandatory each year, including the required local match.** Local match is based on the Local Composite Index calculations. Moving the At-Risk Add-On to the SOQ would ensure all divisions receive this flexible funding resource each year to address student learning needs.

The current At-Risk Add-On provides flexible funds for student intervention. Although the Virginia Department of Education (“VDOE”) collects this information, but the VDOE has no oversight in the evidence-based or targeted use of funds.

Currently, school divisions can “opt-in” to the At-Risk Add-On. With a prescription, school divisions would not be able to opt out of the At-Risk Add-On programming (student intervention programming) and would be required to have the local match appropriated by their local governing body (i.e., the Board of Supervisors or City Council) to their yearly budgets.

School division superintendents decide whether to opt into the At-Risk Add-On based on an annual certification collection. School divisions will usually opt out if the governing body has not provided a local match in the division budget for a fiscal year. Participation is almost universal, as only one school division opted out for FY23 and FY24. Accordingly, moving the At-Risk Add-On to the SOQ would have **no state fiscal impact.**

There is precedent for incorporating optional funding programs into the SOQ formula. Action was taken in 2012-2013 when the Board prescribed, and the General Assembly approved moving the Early Reading Intervention and SOL Algebra Readiness programs into the SOQ as mandatory programs. Each program was previously optional, like the At-Risk Add-On.

If this prescription is drafted consistent with previous Board SOQ prescriptions that used the Board of Education Enhanced At-risk Add-on formula, such a prescription would cost an additional \$25.6 million in FY24 above the existing At-Risk Add-On and SOQ Prevention, Intervention, and Remediation formulas the Board’s formula was proposed to replace.

Possible Prescription Language:

“The Board of Education recommends the General Assembly incorporate the At-Risk Add-On program into the Standards of Quality (SOQ) funding formula as a mandatory program for all school divisions in the Commonwealth.”