

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Virginia Board of Education**  
**Board of Education Standards of Quality (SOQ) Committee**  
**Tuesday, July 20, 2004**

- Prior to the start of the meeting, Mrs. Eleanor B. Saslaw was sworn in as a member of the Board of Education by the Honorable Anita A. Rimler, Secretary of the Commonwealth.
- Dr. Gary Jones, chairman of the committee on the Standards of Quality, opened the meeting with a welcome and explanation of the process the Board of Education used to determine revisions to the Standards of Quality over the past two years. He explained that the process for this year's review would be a collaborative one and invited everyone to become engaged in it. Mr. Thomas Jackson, President of the Board, thanked everyone for their participation. Mr. Mark Emblidge, chair of the Board's committee on low performing schools echoed that thanks.
- Other Board of Education members present: Mr. David Johnson, Mrs. Isis Castro, Mr. Scott Goodman, Mrs. Eleanor Saslaw, Mr. Thomas Johnson, and Dr. Ella Ward.
- The meeting was held in roundtable fashion to solicit comments and discussion with representatives from various organizations on the following five questions:
  1. How should the SOQ be revised to underscore the local school division's responsibilities for the curriculum and instruction provided to its students?
  2. How should the SOQ be revised to emphasize the school division's responsibilities for analyzing data and using the data in making decisions?
  3. How should the SOQ be revised to strengthen professional development at the school division level in low performing school divisions?
  4. How should the SOQ be revised to specify the school division's responsibilities for planning and public involvement?
  5. How should compliance with the SOQ be determined by the Board of Education?
- The following organizations participated in the roundtable discussion and their comments are attached:

Virginia Association of School Superintendents  
Virginia School Boards Association  
Virginia Education Association  
Virginia Education Coalition  
Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals  
Virginia Congress of Parents and Teachers

At the conclusion of the discussion, Board members expressed their desire to support local school divisions and not to be punitive, to maintain the quality in the schools and

not take them over. The Board members expressed their thanks for the comments provided at the meeting and reiterated their intention to work in collaboration with local school divisions and educational organizations in the review and revision of the SOQ.

**Summary of Comments**  
**SOQ Committee Forum**  
**July 20, 2004**

**Virginia Association of School Superintendents – Dr. John H. Kidd, Immediate Past President**

Local School Division Responsibility for Instruction and Curriculum

- School divisions must have the instructional staff to meet the new requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB).
- Class size must be addressed in the SOQ.
- To align curriculum, the local school divisions need help from a team of people.
- The Virginia Association of School Superintendents supports changing the SOQ to require assistant principals at a ratio of 1 per 400 students to give the principals the opportunity to do what is expected of them.

Compliance with the SOQ as Determined by the Board of Education

- The Board of Education should work with the federal government to understand the process Virginia has undergone so we do not back up or wind up with all schools unaccredited under the federal standards.
- The Virginia Association of School Superintendents is concerned about the breaking apart of the fourth and fifth grade social studies test and the effect it has had on accreditation this year.
- The Board of Education needs to blend the mandates of NCLB with the Standards of Learning with the authority of the local school board.
- The Board of Education should exercise patience and give time to the process before providing sanctions.

**Virginia School Boards Association – Patrick Lacy, Special Counsel and Lobbyist**

Local School Division Responsibility for Instruction and Curriculum

- The Virginia School Boards Association is grateful for the action taken by the General Assembly to make up the historic shortfall in funding for public education, but because there was no non-supplanting provision, some school divisions were deprived of part or all of the additional funding.
- The Board of Education should seek full funding for K-12 public education.
- There is no need to revise the SOQ to underscore the school division's responsibilities in instructing students or to address the other issues mentioned in the Board's letter.
- School divisions need adequate resources, in terms of funding or personnel, to meet the requirements of the SOQ. Some are not receiving sufficient funding to meet the demands placed on them.

- The Virginia School Boards Association recommends looking at innovative ways to increase the pool of qualified candidates for administrative positions.
- Consideration should be given to providing additional resources to school divisions experiencing a high failure rate on the Standards of Learning (SOL) tests.
- School divisions lack flexibility to offer instruction or “proof of learning” because the state insists on a single indicator that learning has occurred, the SOL test results.

#### Compliance with the SOQ as Determined by the Board of Education

- The Virginia School Boards Association supports the comments made by Dr. Kidd.
- The Board of Education should concentrate its efforts on systemic problems affecting entire school divisions, rather than a failure in an individual school which is the responsibility of the local school board and superintendent.
- Placing additional demands on school divisions is not the answer. The answer is in recognizing and addressing the primary causes of the failure to reach the goals that have been established.
- The Board of Education already has enforcement mechanisms to address division level failures to implement the law.
- The current certification of compliance requirement should suffice for school divisions that making good faith efforts to comply with the law and achieving the desired results.
- The current authorization for academic reviews should be sufficient to identify those school divisions where there is division-level failure to implement the SOQ.
- If the Board of Education imposes additional extensive requirements on all school divisions, it will do more harm than good. The Board should concentrate its efforts on those school divisions that need additional scrutiny and leave the good school divisions alone.
- The Board of Education should establish system of triggers for levels of scrutiny or invasiveness.

#### **Virginia Education Association – Jean Bankos, President**

#### Local School Division Responsibility for Instruction and Curriculum

- The SOQ should set forth standards that sustain quality teaching and learning for every child. The standards should guarantee highly qualified teachers and principals; appropriate class sizes; safe, orderly, well-maintained schools; sufficient books, supplies and equipment; up-to-date information technologies; curriculum that meets high standards; adequate resources; accountability at all levels.
- The Board of Education should guard against including too much specificity in the SOQ.

- The Virginia Education Association encourages the Board to guard against prescribing specific instructional practices and strategies in the SOQ. The focus should be on providing guidance and technical assistance to divisions needing help.
- Virginia should not move away from its commitment to and support of the fine and practical arts and health and physical education by narrowing the curriculum to a sole focus on subjects tested for accountability.
- The language in Standard 1 should be improved by defining prevention, intervention and remediation as part of the entire program of instruction and changing division-wide ratios of students to teachers to actual class size.

#### Local School Division Responsibility for Analyzing and Using Data

- Regarding Standards 3 and 5, the Virginia Education Association shares the Board’s concern regarding better training in and application of data analysis. Teacher and principal preparation programs must train educators in data analysis, including the diagnostic and formative use of data. Professional development for in-service teachers and administrators must include data analysis, assessment design, and use of data in decision-making.

#### Strengthening Professional Development at the Local School Division Level

- Virginia needs a comprehensive plan for teacher quality and educational leadership as put forth in the Virginia Education Coalition’s *Blueprint for Virginia Public Schools: A Long-Range Plan for the Future of Public Education in Virginia*. It must address compensation for teachers and administrators.
- The SOQ should authorize the Board to develop standards for quality professional development. The SOQ should speak to adequate funding for quality professional development as well as time for sustained, job-embedded, collegial learning and planning. Relevancy should be based on division-wide goals, school-based goals, and individual professional growth plans. Effectiveness should be evaluated based on evidence of positive changes to school climate and culture, family-school engagement, and student learning.
- The Virginia Education Association urges high quality professional development requirements and adequate compensation for education support professionals in schools

#### Compliance with the SOQ as Determined by the Board of Education

- The Virginia Education Association is concerned about the quest for “centralized enforcement capabilities.” Will demographically advantaged divisions receive the same scrutiny as poor divisions? Will the SOQ be uniformly enforced?
- The Board of Education should not forget the needs of individual children in the effort to comply with the various required standards in the SOQ.

## **Virginia Education Coalition – Dr. Charles Maranzano, Coalition Chair**

### Strengthening Professional Development at the Local School Division Level

- The local ability to pay is one deterrent to excellent staff development.
- Professional development is a function of resources and financing.

### Compliance with the SOQ as Determined by the Board of Education

- The Board of Education should consider the impact of the SOQ on poor, resource starved communities. Members should spend a day in a low performing school division and talk with staff about the challenges they face.
- The Board of Education should not use standardized testing as one of sole sources to determine if school is doing well. We need a holistic approach.
- The Board of Education should look at the successes at local level and celebrate what is right in the schools.
- The Board should take from what works in resource rich school divisions and share that with poor school divisions.
- The Board should assist schools instead of punishing them.

## **Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals – Dr. Gregory Wheeler, President**

### Local School Division Responsibility for Instruction and Curriculum

- The Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals supports changing the SOQ to require assistant principals at a ratio of 1 per 400 students. Schools need knowledgeable well-trained assistant principals.
- Small school divisions have additional challenges when building administrators have to do the work that central office personnel do in other school divisions.

### Compliance with the SOQ as Determined by the Board of Education

- When one test is used as a snapshot, you do not get the true picture of how a student is performing because you are only testing performance on that one given day.
- Low performing schools have their own set of challenges.

## **Virginia Congress of Parents and Teachers – Debi Abadie, Chair, Education Committee**

### Local School Division Responsibility for Planning and Public Involvement

- The Virginia Congress of Parents and Teachers recommends the following be added to paragraph C. of Standard 6 which describes the components of the divisionwide six-year improvement plan: “a plan for parent and family

involvement to include building successful partnerships which includes an assessment in ongoing practices.”