

MINUTES
Virginia Board of Education
Committee on School and Division Accountability
November 18, 2015
1:00 p.m.
Jefferson Conference Room; James Monroe Building

Welcome and Opening Comments

The following Board of Education (Board) members were present for the November 18, 2015 Committee on School and Division Accountability meeting: Diane Atkinson; Dr. Billy Cannaday, Jr.; James Dillard; Darla Edwards; Sal Romero, Jr; and Joan Wodiska. Dr. Steven Staples, the superintendent of public instruction, was also present.

Ms. Atkinson, chairman of this committee, convened the meeting and welcomed the Board members and guests. As part of her introductory remarks, she said today's meeting would focus on several items on the Board's agenda for tomorrow's meeting. She said this would give the Board the opportunity to have a robust discussion of the items in advance of first review at the business meeting. She then asked for a motion to amend the agenda. Mr. Dillard moved that the order of the agenda items be adjusted, the motion was seconded by Mr. Romero, and the agenda items were approved by the Board in the following order:

1. Discussion of Proposed Revised Curriculum Framework for 2015 *History and Social Science Standards of Learning*
2. Discussion of Requests for *Partially Accredited: Reconstituted School* from Twenty-Two School Divisions
3. Discussion of *Regulations Establishing the Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*
 - Instruction Concepts
 - Review of SOA Planning Guide

Approval of Minutes from the October 21, 2015 Meeting

Dr. Cannaday made a motion that the minutes from the last meeting (held on October 21, 2015) be adopted by the Board as drafted. This motion was seconded by Ms. Wodiska and adopted by the Board.

Public Comment

Four individuals signed up for public comment, but only two of those persons were present.

Michelle Williams introduced herself as the mother of four children in Chesterfield County Public Schools. She said three of her children have current Individualized Education Plans, or IEPs, which are being ignored. She stated that one of her children has been pushed out of school, another is on the way, and another is being taught that

the child is “the immigrant.” She asserted that school districts ignore and refuse to be accountable for their actions. They ignore parents like her when provided information that she knows will impact her son’s emotional stability. The school division refuses to take proper procedures and protocols with her son when he is having a meltdown. They refuse to be accountable when they are asked to collect medical documentation that would support IEP meetings or her children’s overall well-being. She said she has made several requests and had a few meetings this school year. She has provided the school division with information that impacts her 15 year-old son. However, this son has to be 19 at times because her 19 year-old son, who has autism, was pushed out by Meadowbrook High School. She asked how do you go from (on November 2) being told that your son has no behavior issues to where he is now facing assault charges? On the day in question, she never received a phone call. Yet, the school knew her son’s situation. She asked how can a judge overrule measures the Board has put in place to protect children like her children? She asked when the educational genocide would stop in Virginia’s schools. Her other child is the only Black child in a classroom where she is being taught that she is the “immigrant.”

Kandise Lucas introduced herself as an advocate for *Advocates for Equity in Schools* and an advocate throughout Virginia. She said she cannot seem to get direct answers as to how we will hold school divisions accountable for pushing out advocates, pushing out parents, and, specifically, pushing out African-American males. She said we know that Virginia is number one in the nation for referring African-American males and others to law enforcement and that Virginia is the top producer for the school-to-prison pipeline. She asked if that is really an accolade that we wish to have. Parents have a federal right to have an advocate. She said that we do not have an effective intervention plan in place to address this crisis, and she asked when this would happen.

Discussion of Proposed Revised Curriculum Framework for 2015 *History and Social Science Standards of Learning*

Dr. Billy Haun, chief academic officer and assistant superintendent for instruction for the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), introduced the presenters for this agenda item: Betsy Barton, VDOE specialist for history and social science and Christine Harris, VDOE director for the office of humanities and early childhood, with Christonya Brown, VDOE history and social science education coordinator as the lead presenter. Dr. Haun said they would provide a quick overview of the performance tasks, as well as an overview of the proposed revised curriculum framework for the 2015 *History and Social Science Standards of Learning*. He said much of this curriculum framework was designed to provide more engaging opportunities for students, to provide assessments and formative feedback, and to provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge.

Ms. Brown began with an explanation of the project’s main goal: to prepare better informed citizens so that they are participants in our nation’s future. She said, in 2014, House Bill 930 and Senate Bill 306 replaced some state Standards of Learning assessments with locally developed assessments. She said five were replaced, but

today she would only address those impacting history and social science. She discussed the following:

- Standards of Learning (SOL) Released Items that would have assessed US1.7 as an example discussed by the Board
- Locally developed assessments may be a challenge
- Revisions of the curriculum framework and resulting change in instructional practices
- Guidelines for Local Alternative Assessments for 2014-2015 – “...this [test replacement] should be viewed as an opportunity to engage in innovation that will provide new opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge of the curriculum.”
- A performance task generally requires students to use skills or create a product
- A sample of performance tasks provided by Virginia Beach Public Schools
- The creation of the students’ product in response to questions (the performance assessment)
- 2015 proposed revisions to the history and social science curriculum framework
- Section 22.1-253.13:1.2 of the *Code of Virginia* - Board shall establish a regular schedule, as it deems appropriate, to review and revise as necessary, the SOL at least once every seven years
- The revision process – included various committees; at least 30 teachers included; also had an external committee composed of representatives from organizations, historians, and universities. Added another committee to address social science skills
- Teaching for understanding
- Collaboration and integration
- What’s new in the framework
- Curriculum framework format
- Essential questions
- Essential skills
- Applying social science skills

A Board member mentioned that “civic readiness” could be added. Another Board member thanked Ms. Brown for condensing the information provided to them. He also asked her to describe the transition process and the degree to which the department would provide support to the school divisions to help them make this change in teaching practice. Ms. Brown said they would need to meet with as many teachers as possible. The department will start with its history and social science contacts and use a train-the-trainer model. In addition, it will offer institutes next fall in all eight regions. Dr. Staples said there is a concern from teachers who have said they like this process, but this will be a lot of work. Thus, the department would continue efforts to encourage divisions to share resources so teachers will have access as they develop their own performance assessments. Dr. Harris also mentioned that, in October, the department worked with partners to provide training in formative assessments to teams from each participating division. During this training, they shared not only what they were doing, but what support they would need to enhance their skills. Another Board member said this is not

new at his school as they are already using this process in other contents areas such as mathematics, and it will be just a matter of transferring it into other content areas. A Board member said we may be able to give credit to the teachers for this kind of work so that it is meaningful and helps with the licensure requirements. Board members thanked staff for their hard work and mentioned that they liked the practical examples provided. A Board member said she hoped divisions would see that we are all in this together and share resources. Another Board member thanked them for working with the Commission on Civic Education.

Discussion of Requests for *Partially Accredited: Reconstituted School* from Twenty-Two School Divisions

Beverly Rabil, director of the office of school improvement (at VDOE), led this discussion. She explained that, as outlined in the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (SOA), as an alternative to the memorandum of understanding for schools rated *Accreditation Denied*, a local school board may choose to reconstitute the school and apply to the Board for a rating of *Partially Accredited: Reconstituted School*. Such status may be granted for a period not to exceed three years if the school is making progress toward a rating of *Fully Accredited*. A school will revert to *Accreditation Denied* if it fails to meet the requirements for *Fully Accredited* by the end of the three-year period or if it fails to have its annual application for the rating renewed. Thirty-nine schools have been deemed *Accredited with Warning* for three consecutive years and are not *Fully Accredited* in 2015-2016. Applications for reconstitution were reviewed focusing on student performance data, areas of reconstitution, and the rationale for the trajectory of progress expected. The Board material included criteria used to make recommendations for each application. The Office of School Improvement provided technical assistance to these school divisions during the process.

The following school divisions have submitted their applications for the rating: *Partially Accredited: Reconstituted School*.

Name of Division	Name of School Requesting Rating of <i>Partially Accredited: Reconstituted School</i>
Bedford County Public Schools	Staunton River Middle School
Buchanan County Public Schools	Riverview Elementary/Middle School
Buena Vista Public Schools	Enderly Heights Elementary School (PK-2)
Buena Vista Public Schools	F.W. Kling Elementary School (3-5)
Buena Vista Public Schools	Parry McCluer Middle School
Campbell County Public Schools	Rustburg Middle School
Danville City Public Schools	Woodberry Hills Elementary School
Essex County Public Schools	Essex High School
Franklin City Public Schools	S.P. Morton Elementary School
Franklin City Public Schools	J.P. King, Jr. Middle School
Frederick County Public Schools	Frederick County Middle School
Hampton City Public Schools	John B. Cary Elementary School

Name of Division	Name of School Requesting Rating of <i>Partially Accredited: Reconstituted School</i>
Hampton City Public Schools	Luther W. Machen Elementary School
Hampton City Public Schools	Andrew William Ernest Bassette Elementary School
Hampton City Public Schools	Hunter B. Andrews School
Henrico County Public Schools	Fairfield Middle School
Lynchburg City Public Schools	Heritage Elementary School
Lynchburg City Public Schools	Paul Lawrence Dunbar Middle School for Innovation
Mecklenburg County Public Schools	Bluestone Middle School
Newport News City Public Schools	Carver Elementary School
Newport News City Public Schools	Horace H. Epes Elementary School
Norfolk City Public Schools	James Monroe Elementary School
Norfolk City Public Schools	Jacox Elementary School
Norfolk City Public Schools	Richard Bowling Elementary School
Norfolk City Public Schools	Norview Middle School
Norfolk City Public Schools	Azalea Gardens Middle School
Petersburg City Public School	Walnut Hill Elementary School
Portsmouth City Public Schools	Churchland Middle School
Portsmouth City Public Schools	Cradock Middle School
Prince William Public Schools	Fred M. Lynn Middle School
Richmond City Public Schools	Binford Middle School
Richmond City Public Schools	Henderson Middle School
Richmond City Public Schools	Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School
Richmond City Public Schools	Lucille Brown Middle School
Richmond City Public Schools	Patrick Henry School of Science and Arts
Southampton County Public Schools	Riverdale Elementary School
Staunton City Public Schools	Bessie Weller Elementary School
Suffolk City Public Schools	King's Fork High School
Virginia Beach City Public Schools	Bettie F. Williams Elementary School

All schools granted the rating of *Partially Accredited: Reconstituted School* will participate in the Aligning Academic Review and Performance Evaluation (AARPE) technical assistance through VDOE.

Ms. Rabil then provided an overview of each of the applications and the recommendation for each. A Board member commended Ms. Rabil on the response to the conversations they had last year regarding a set of empowering criteria that would guide what school divisions would submit and that would help in evaluating the degree to which that submission warranted action or changes. (See the following document and its attachments for the applications: [Discussion of Requests for Partially Accredited: Reconstituted School from Twenty-Two School Divisions.](#))

Board discussion followed the presentation of the application for each school. A Board member commended staff for the work that had gone into putting the packets together and acknowledged the technical assistance provided during this process. A Board member asked for information regarding parental engagement. Another Board member said he thought it was important to include in the plan a section in which the school division could self-reflect; that is, contemplate what the learned lessons are and what do we need to change?

This item is on the agenda for first review at tomorrow's Board meeting and will be included on the January 2016 Board agenda. Dr. Staples asked that Board members let the staff know if they wish to have school division staff present at the January meeting.

Discussion of Regulations Establishing the Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia

The meeting continued with a discussion of the comprehensive review of the *Regulations Establishing the Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (SOA). This item was discussed in two sections: Instruction Concepts and Review of the SOA Planning Guide.

Dr. Billy Haun led the discussion regarding Instruction Concepts and Eric Rhoades, director of the office of science and health education, assisted.

Dr. Haun began with a discussion of the definition of the term *laboratory science*. He said they talked about laboratory science in July, but were coming back for additional discussion because there were questions at that time. Dr. Haun said that the term speaks to what students are doing and not where it takes place. He said laboratory experiments can take place in many places and do not necessarily have to take place in an actual laboratory. He then went on to say that the SOA require laboratory science as a graduation requirement for both the standard and advanced studies diplomas. However, that term is not currently defined in these regulations. By defining the term in the regulations, there will be a common understanding of what it means.

Board members raised the following questions and staff responses followed.

- Does the current curriculum framework for sciences address the issue of laboratory science? The answer was yes.
- If it is embedded in the framework now, then why is a separate definition needed? Although it is addressed to a certain extent, the department continues to get calls for technical assistance. Thus, additional clarification is needed.
- Has the definition increased the number of courses that are called laboratory science? No.
- Do you think we would have additional courses that, when applying this definition, could be considered a laboratory science? You already have a list of Board-approved courses and this would just apply to those courses.
- You do not anticipate any new courses that might emerge; for example, an engineering course? As you move through the January, February, and March meetings, future discussion may give us this answer.

- Are there any course offerings now that would not fall within the new definition? No. This will not change the current offerings. It will just provide some clarity with a term that is currently used.
- Should we add to the definition a focus on the skills? We are trying to emphasize that, in a laboratory, students should be highly engaged. We will bring a revised definition back to the Board.

Dr. Haun said they are not talking about adding any graduation requirements, but are proposing a requirement that the three required science credits must come from three different disciplines for the Standard Diploma. A Board member asked if we knew what courses students are not taking and whether this would impact the teacher critical shortage areas. She asked about the rationale for this proposal. Mr. Rhoades said that, for the past two years, schools have not identified science as a critical shortage area, but there are some school divisions who do have this problem. Moreover, this would not require hiring more teachers, but might change their distribution. In addition, this could result in additional expenses for materials. When it comes to preparation for the workforce, he said employers say they need students with a better grasp of mathematics. This would allow students to have excellent applied mathematics in a science course and build their mathematics skills. Now more technical fields expect students to have this background. He said Fairfax has had this in place since the 1990s. A Board member said she still has concerns about the impact and what it would do to schools that have difficulty staffing. Dr. Haun said this can be part of later discussions in January, February, and March. Another Board member said the case might be made by showing a connection to the application of mathematics and the issue of what is needed in the workplace. He said it might be good to include some reference to this.

In response to an incident that happened in a public school several weeks ago, a Board member mentioned that Virginia does not require teachers to have laboratory safety certification. Only eight states currently have this requirement. She asked what we can do to help students and support teachers. She would like to know Mr. Rhoades' thoughts on this at a later time. He said this issue has already been discussed with Dr. Staples and Dr. Haun and that training has been offered in the past. All school divisions are required to have a chemical hygiene plan, and there are expectations that school divisions do this kind of training. Although it is not codified in the *Code of Virginia* or regulations, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) expects certain measures to be in place to ensure safety.

Dr. Cynthia Cave, assistant superintendent for policy and communications at the VDOE, led the review of a draft SOA Planning Guide. In the proposal, she broke the Planning Guide into three categories: Graduation, Accreditation, and Board Authority, and she included suggested timelines for each of these categories. Dr. Cave summarized the information under each category and noted that this suggested work plan would provide time for discussion of concepts followed by drafting of amendments to SOA sections. The first review of the comprehensive revision of the SOA is planned for June. Public comments would be gathered in the summer, with the final review planned for September. She said staff could draft language for Board members to consider. She

also said that compliance with corrective action plans had been raised in the past and noted that, in some cases, there has been no follow-through. This is something that can be addressed as part of the discussions about the memorandum of understanding.

Board President Billy Cannaday said he appreciated staff creating a Planning Guide for the SOA and other key work. However, he said Board members would need sufficient background information when discussion took place and noted that new Board members will be appointed soon. He also noted that there are several venues where these discussions can take place: accountability committee meetings, Board meetings, the Board's Brown Bag lunches, and a retreat potential. It might be helpful to set forth what would be discussed and when, as time is needed for learning and discussion before any action is taken. He asked Dr. Cave to add this to the SOA Planning Guide. Dr. Staples strongly supported this suggestion. Another Board member said the Board does not meet in August, but Dr. Staples explained that any public hearings held during that month would be held around the state. Another Board member raised two other concepts to be discussed during the Planning Guide timeframe: where to build in flexibility and the creation of a mechanism for when changes are made to the Standards of Learning and assessments to ensure that a safety net is created and schools are not labeled as failing as a result of these changes. She said she wanted to ensure that these concepts are not lost. A Board member said some of the concepts are interrelated so they need to be aware of how the various changes may impact other areas.

Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Ms. Atkinson thanked Dr. Staples and department staff for the thoroughness of the materials, and she thanked stakeholders in the audience for their continued interest in the business of the Board.

The meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m.