

MINUTES
Virginia Board of Education
Committee on School and Division Accountability
Wednesday; May 27, 2015; 1:07 p.m.
Jefferson Conference Room, James Monroe Building

Welcome and Opening Comments

The following Board of Education (Board) members were present for the May 27, 2015 Committee on School and Division Accountability meeting: Diane Atkinson; Christian Braunlich; Dr. Billy Cannaday, Jr.; James Dillard; Darla Edwards; Elizabeth Vickrey Lodal; Sal Romero, Jr.; and Joan Wodiska. Dr. Steven Staples, the superintendent of public instruction, was also present.

Mrs. Atkinson, chairman of the committee, convened the meeting and welcomed the Board members and guests.

Approval of Minutes from the April 21, 2015 Meeting

The minutes from the April 21, 2015 meeting were approved by the Committee.

Public Comment

There was no one present who wished to provide public comment.

Introductory Comments

Mrs. Atkinson welcomed Board members and guests to today's meeting and said it would focus on the re-design of the school performance report card and revisions to the Standards of Accreditation. She said, at its retreat last October, the Board indicated interest in re-designing the existing report card so that it is a better tool for communicating school and student performance. In addition, HB 1672 and SB 727 (2015 General Assembly) require the Board to re-design the report card in consultation with the Standards of Learning Innovation Committee by July 1, 2016. She noted that the focus of the February 2015 Accountability committing was on the report card. The Board learned about the current report card as well as some possible components from a focus group that the department had utilized. Members also learned about other state report cards and the different components that they use. They also heard about the ESEA report card requirements, including those in the reauthorization proposals going forward. Now the Board will begin the work to re-design the current report card.

Report on Timeline for the School Performance Report Card Design

Charles Pyle, director of the office of communications, and Bethann Canada, director of the office of educational information management, reported on this agenda item.

Mr. Pyle reported on the proposed timeline for re-design. He reminded the Board that previously he had provided a history of the school report card in Virginia from the days

of the Allen administration through the present. He said the department is in the process of finalizing a statement of work with AIS Network, a McLean-based technology company. This company has a contract with the state for IT services. At this time, there is a core group of department staff working with AIS Network, including Bethann Canada, members of the department's office of communications, and members of the office of educational information management. This school report card will be in compliance with all national and state standards for accessibility and will be designed to be readily upgradeable. In addition, there will be a user guide and a video to help users understand the report card and use it proficiently.

He then provided a broad overview of the timeline which will be a three-phase process:

- Phase 1 – initial prototype development
- Phase 2 – summary prototype development
- Phase 3 – production, testing, and launch

Each phase culminates in the development of a product. The first two phases culminate in the development of two types of prototypes. The last phase culminates with the Board's approval of the re-design in June 2016 to be followed by a public launch in September 2016. Stakeholders will be involved in the development process.

Board discussion followed. One Board member asked that the materials for this project be made available to the Board and to stakeholders for review in a timely manner to allow time for sufficient review and participation.

Mrs. Atkinson then thanked Mr. Pyle; Ms. Canada; and Dr. Cynthia Cave, assistant superintendent for the division of policy and communications, for the presentation.

Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Virginia's Accountability System

John Eisenberg, assistant superintendent for special education and student services, presented this agenda item. Jo Ann Burkholder, director of the office of student services, and Dr. Samantha Hollins, director of the office of special education program improvement, accompanied him.

Mr. Eisenberg presented the following suggestions regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in the accountability system:

- Create a holistic view of accountability
- Create a system of rewards and incentives instead of punishments
- Reward growth towards target
- Continue to examine subgroup performance and reward based on subgroup progress
- Consider the needs of students with disabilities at the beginning and not after the fact

He said there has been a great deal of focus on the academics over the past few years and, as a result, some of the other core principles have been forgotten. He asked that students with special needs are not forgotten as we move forward. There has been a

growing national movement where three or four states have adopted social and emotional core competencies. These are the critical skills our students will need when they leave school and go out into the world of work or independent living. He noted that all of our students will not go to college. The core skills (self-management, self-awareness, responsible decision-making, relationship skills, and social awareness) are as important, if not more important, than just the academic skills. Students need to have these skills.

A Board member asked what he was asking for as the Standards of Accreditation are being revised. Mr. Eisenberg said some of this has been addressed, but it has been a piecemeal approach. Ms. Burkholder said some of this is defused across the standards, but those standards then get lost. The Board member asked for additional information. Mr. Eisenberg said they are willing to do the research and would need significant stakeholder input. Dr. Staples said multiple agencies already collect data related to these issues. Part of the work is finding out where data like this is already collected. Mr. Eisenberg said there has been some history in measuring these issues through the school climate survey. However, they would need some significant time to look at this. A Board member said she did not know enough to say whether it would be appropriate to include these kinds of standards in the school accreditation regulations. Mr. Eisenberg said they looked at about 20 of the schools with accreditation challenges and staff visited them to discuss the school climate survey. They found that many of them had not looked at the data. One Board member said they might want to consider these issues under effective schools. Mr. Eisenberg said he felt it was necessary to discuss this with the Board members before completing additional research. The Board agreed that he should continue with this project.

The second issue he discussed was parent engagement. He asked if the Board would be interested in looking at this issue as part of highly effective schools. Other issues he raised included graduation (possible credit accommodations for the Advanced Studies Diploma), disproportionality, and discipline.

Mr. Eisenberg will come back to the Board with additional information regarding these issues and make some formal recommendations. A Board member asked him to bring back information on the costs of the changes as well as information about the return on the investment.

Discussion of Proposed Amendments to the *Regulations Establishing the Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia to Comport with Legislation Passed by the General Assembly (2012-2015 Sessions) (Fast-Track)*

Dr. Cynthia Cave presented this agenda item with Shelley Loving-Ryder, assistant superintendent of the division of student assessment and school improvement.

Dr. Cave said she and Ms. Loving-Ryder will bring to the Board today those changes in the Standards of Accreditation (SOA) that will be before them in June as a fast-track regulatory action. She reviewed a chart with the proposed revisions to the SOA responsive to legislative directives from 2012 through 2015. Because these changes are responsive to legislative directives brought forth by the General Assembly, there is

little Board discretion in terms of putting them in the regulations. For this reason, the Board can use the fact-track regulatory process, which reduces the time-period required for promulgating the regulations unless there are ten people who object or a member of the applicable standing committee of the General Assembly or a member of the Joint Commission on Administrative Rules objects. Dr. Cave said she presented this legislation to the Board in March of this year and then again as a final report. There are bills that would impact expedited re-takes, student required training in CPR and the use of automated external defibrillators, the Special Diploma/Applied Studies Diploma change, the administration of epinephrine in schools, school threat assessment teams, lockdown drills, and student self-check of glucose levels. In addition, there are bills passed during the 2015 General Assembly that allow some Board discretion: waiver of the 140 clock hours of instruction, review of the accreditation status of schools every three years based on certain criteria, and additional accreditation ratings.

Board discussion followed the presentations. A Board member said she did not believe the regulation regarding HB 134 and SB 532 belongs in the SOA. These bills allow students with diabetes to carry diabetic supplies with them while at school and self-check blood glucose levels on school property. In response, Dr. Cave said that this proposed amendment to the regulation can be deleted. The Board member also had concerns about including HB 1674 (three-year accreditation) in the fast-track action. Dr. Cave suggested that this issue could be pulled and included in the comprehensive review of the SOA. When she asked the Board how they wanted her to precede, the members agreed to pull this item from the fast-track action. A Board member also asked about HB 1675 and SB 982 (waiver of 140 clock hours of instruction) and the timeline for getting the guidelines before the Board so they can be in place before the school year starts. Dr. Staples replied that it is understood that the guidelines must be in place for the next school year.

Ms. Loving-Ryder provided information about Part VIII of the Standards of Accreditation – School Accreditation. She talked about how the new accreditation ratings might fit in with what we currently have and discussed examples. She also reviewed the ratings as they currently stand and reviewed the benchmarks for the content areas. In addition, she discussed HB 1873 (2015), which directs the Board of Education to promulgate regulations establishing additional accreditation ratings that recognize the progress of schools and student growth.

Board members then followed up with discussion:

- A Board member raised concerns about fast-tracking this issue and the lack of time for thoughtful consideration.
- Another Board member mentioned looking at the purpose of accreditation as defined in the *Code of Virginia*.
- A Board member asked Ms. Loving-Ryder if any consideration had been given to new accreditation titles. She said some new titles have been considered and she discussed them. The ratings would have to be in place in time to be applied for calculations to be made next year in the spring. Dr. Staples said the process to be followed when the regulations are open can be challenging. One

of the staff suggestions is to avoid putting all of the detail in the regulations themselves. Instead, provide clarification for the requirements in the guidelines. This way the department can be more responsive to changes without starting all over with an 18-month process when changes are needed. He said we do not want to lose the Board's intent so the regulations have to clearly say what it is that the Board wants to happen.

- A Board member said they need to look at the Administrative Process Act (APA) because a Board requirement may have to go through the APA regulatory process rather than be placed in guidelines.

Review of April 2015 Retreat Summary

Dr. Cynthia Cave presented this agenda item.

For this agenda item, Mrs. Atkinson provided an overview of the actions at the April retreat. She said that, at the retreat, the Board began a discussion of where they wanted to make changes in the SOA on a conceptual basis. The task was not to revise the language, but to give staff enough information so they could develop a draft revision consistent with the discussion. The document provided to the Board today merely reflects that discussion. Mrs. Atkinson said she had asked Board members to communicate to Dr. Cave prior to this meeting any areas they felt did not accurately reflect a point they had made or did not include a point made. In addition, the document also reflects comments made by stakeholders in the room and staff. She said her hope this afternoon was that the Board will add additional context for changes, ask questions, and provide additional feedback so that staff may develop a proposal that is consistent with today's discussion.

A Board member indicated she did not believe the document reflected the shift in philosophy by the Board to move to an accreditation system that provides rewards rather than punishment and a system that rewards and recognizes growth. That is what she thought she had heard during the discussions. She felt the document presented did not reflect the concepts discussed and how education in the state will be structured and supported. Dr. Cave said the philosophy section could set that tone and other sections could reflect this. The Board member said they also talked during the retreat about a culture of excellence, a culture of improvement, support for students and staff and, that as a philosophy of the Board, these cultural elements mattered. Another Board member mentioned that this could be addressed in the purpose and philosophy sections. Another Board member suggested that they consider the intent. He also said it might be helpful to have a conversation about the purpose and philosophy and the major elements to be included. A Board member said staff is in a position to look at this and consider the impact state-wide. It would be helpful to provide the Board with suggestions with justifications. Another Board member suggested that staff include in the document the following:

- A vision statement for each element
- A summary of Board discussion at the retreat
- Staff recommendations

A Board member said the Board has to agree on what the big things are and staff can come back with additional information. Dr. Cave said staff can research the issues, provide a draft, and make recommendations. Another member asked Dr. Cave if she had heard what she needed to hear to come back with recommendations. She provided an overview of what she believed the Board wanted.

Board members also made the following comments:

- They need to look at the capacity to implement at the local level and whether there needs to be time allowed for the school divisions to implement any changes.
- A Board member reviewed the five elements set out in the purpose included in the current SOA and suggested that that language be modified. He provided specific changes to the language and said he thought that might be a good starting point. He thought staff could come back with recommendations based on these suggestions. Another member agreed that those five statements, as is, could be greatly improved to reflect a lot of what they have done.
- Another member noted that those five points do not consider parental engagement and leadership in the building. In addition, she noted that, at the retreat, the members had a great discussion about quality of staff, support of staff, salaries, and professional development.
- A member asked Dr. Staples about the timeline. Dr. Staples said there are dual tracks going. Much of what has been discussed here is part of the more comprehensive review of the SOA rather than the fast-track action to address legislative changes only.

Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Mrs. Atkinson said if there are components that can be brought back to the committee in June, she would like to see this. Dr. Staples agreed. She also suggested that questions be brought back at that time.

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.