MINUTES
Virginia Board of Education
Committee on School and Division Accountability
May 22, 2013
2 P.M.
Jefferson Conference Room, James Monroe Building

Welcome and Opening Comments

Mrs. Diane Atkinson, chairman of the Committee on School and Division Accountability, convened the meeting with the following Board members present: Betsy Beamer, Christian Braunlich, Dr. Billy Cannaday, Jr., Darla Edwards, David Foster, Winsome Sears, and Joan Wodiska. Dr. Patricia Wright, superintendent of public instruction, was also present.

Mrs. Atkinson welcomed the Board members and guests to the committee meeting and made the following remarks. She said they were present to discuss the revisions to the Board's *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*, also known as the SOA. She stated that these standards are designed to ensure that an effective educational program is established and maintained in Virginia's public schools. These standards establish student achievement expectations, provide direction regarding school and instructional leadership, and establish a means of determining the effectiveness of schools.

Ms. Atkinson went on to say that in June 2012, the Board approved emergency amendments to the SOA in response to legislation which strengthened post-secondary education and work-place readiness opportunities for students and consolidated the number of Board of Education diplomas. Those emergency regulations were recently approved by the Governor and will become effective June 5. When the Board approved the emergency regulations, it also approved submission of a *Notice of Intended Regulatory Action* (NOIRA) for a comprehensive revision of the SOA which will include action to make those emergency amendments permanent and action to make other updates required by the last General Assembly. The purpose of today's meeting is to give an overview of the current SOA, including those emergency amendments; to review what revisions will be needed to reflect the 2013 legislation; to hear from education organizations regarding their suggestions for revisions to the SOA; and to have a Board-member discussion to give guidance to the staff as they look at those revisions.

She then said on June 26, 2013, this committee will meet again to hear from those education stakeholders who were not able to provide presentations for today's meeting and to review a draft of the proposed amendments to the SOA. Ms. Atkinson indicated that she hoped the Board would have the opportunity to see those proposed amendments on June 27 for first review. On July 25, 2013, the Accountability Committee will meet again to review public comment and any changes to the proposed amendments. At the July 26 full Board meeting, she hopes to have final review of the

proposed amendments to these regulations. She acknowledged that these regulations are in the proposal stage; therefore, it will be necessary to go through the Executive Review process after the Board's approval. Once that is done, the regulations are published and open for public comment. After the public comment period, the Board will review and take action for the final stage.

She then asked if anyone present wanted to provide general public comment. No one in the audience responded.

Ms. Atkinson then introduced Anne Wescott, assistant superintendent for policy and communications. Ms. Wescott presented an overview of the current SOA and included the emergency regulations approved last year. She also discussed bills passed by the General Assembly and how they would be incorporated into the SOA. (Her presentation can be viewed at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/committees_standing/accountability/2013/meeting_materials/05-22-2013_overview_regs_establishing_soa.pdf.)

The following education organizations also made presentations at this meeting at the request of the committee.

- Dr. Steven Staples represented the Virginia Association of School Superintendents. He suggested significant reform should be considered and also provided specific suggestions for revisions to the SOA.
- Dr. Keith Perrigan represented the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals. He spoke about a model representative of successful schools which represents a number of ways to close the achievement gap. He also suggested promotion of flexibility in the school calendar to allow additional instructional time and he expressed concerns about the new A-F system. He said over-reliance on standardized tests will continue to spawn this type of legislation.
- Deborah Frazier represented the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals. She suggested that certain children at the elementary and middle school level should have an opportunity to take an expedited retake of selected Standards of Learning (SOL) tests. She also asked that the number of tests required for third grade students be reduced to English and mathematics. In addition, she asked that elementary principals be employed on a 12 month basis.
- Dr. Daryl Chesley represented the Virginia Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. This organization supports assessments systems that serve the students' needs while including multiple measures, each with a clear purpose. He suggested a more balanced system with significantly fewer SOL tests and validated growth measures in reading and math. (Due to time constraints, Mrs. Atkinson asked that questions regarding SOL testing be deferred until another time. Dr. Wright explained that computer adapted testing will be piloted next spring and the department is also working to get a schedule and cost. This will address many of the issues raised today. However, everything has to be done within the existing budget.)

- Megan Moore represented the [Virginia ESL Supervisors Association](). She indicated that the organization fully supports the continued use of the SOA adjustment for ELLs. However, this organization feels the new growth indicators are too new to be considered as part of accreditation. In addition, she suggested that school based committees be continued.
- Peter Blake spoke on behalf of the State Council of Higher Education (SCHEV). He said the Board faces enormous challenges. Approximately two-thirds to three-quarters of the jobs in the next 10 or 15 years will require some form of post-secondary education. He asked that they look at a student growth model in addition to other forms of assessment. He asked the Board to consider ways to encourage the enhanced use of instructional technology. Finally, he asked that they consider some recommendations that would expand support for school divisions that do not have sufficient resources.

(Click on each organization's title above to review its presentation.)

Once the presentations were completed, Ms. Atkinson indicated that staff needed to hear the Board's discussion about the issues before them. Other groups will come before the committee in June. Board members asked that staff also provide information where there are alignment and gaps within the SOA regulations and the *Code of Virginia*.

Specific process requirements were discussed. As to revision of the SOA regulations, a complete revision is not feasible at this time due to the timelines within the Administrative Process Act. However, the Board can always ask for additional review with another NOIRA. The possibility of three stages of review was mentioned:

- Follow through on pending regulations.
- Work on what can be accomplished now.
- Look at a longer process for a major overhaul of the SOA.

Dr. Wright asked the Board members for specific suggestions in preparation for the June 2013 meeting.

The meeting was then adjourned.