

**Virginia Board of Education**  
**Special Committee to Review the Standards of Accreditation**  
**Wednesday, September 22, 2021 at 2:30 p.m.**  
**Board Room, 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor, James Monroe Building**

**Welcome and Opening Comments**

The Virginia Board of Education (Board) convened the Special Committee to Review the Standards of Accreditation (SOA) on September 22, 2021, at 2:30 p.m. The meeting was held in-person and open to the public. It was also livestreamed on the [Virginia Department of Education \(VDOE\) YouTube webpage](#).

The following committee members were present for the meeting Dr. Keisha Anderson, Dr. Mann, Dr. Pamela Davis-Vaught, Dr. Francisco Durán, and Dr. Jamelle Wilson.

The following Board members were also present: Mr. Daniel Gecker, Mrs. Anne Holton, Dr. Roberson, and Mr. Anthony Swann.

Staff from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) were also present, including Dr. James Lane, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Emily Webb, Director of Board Relations.

**Opening and Approval of the Minutes**

Dr. Keisha Anderson, chair of this committee, convened the meeting at 2:30 p.m. and welcomed Board members and staff to the meeting.

Dr. Anderson noted that the committee is nearing the completion of its work and will be providing recommendations on the Standards of Accreditations (SOA) to the full Board of Education in October.

Dr. Durán made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 21, 2021 meeting of the Special Committee to Review the Standards of Accreditation. \_\_\_\_\_ (?) seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

**Finalizing Recommendations for Amendments to the Standards of Accreditation**

Dr. Leslie Sale, Director, VDOE Office of Policy, presented the finalized proposed amendments to the SOA. Dr. Sale highlighted technical and substantive edits to the SOA proposed by committee members and VDOE staff.

- Dr. Anderson asked how the comprehensive or long-range plans would satisfy the Board's desire to understand and incorporate equity in the accreditation process.
- Dr. Sale explained that the plans would look different school by school based on the school's data, demographics, and some of the other strategic components. Some schools may have already satisfied the requirement to incorporate equity into their strategic plans. Dr. Sale also explained that there is already a requirement in the SOA and Standards of Quality for the local school boards to develop a comprehensive, unified, long-range plan with statewide participation. Another built-in accountability is that school divisions are required to certify that they are meeting prerequisites for accreditation to be eligible for receiving an accreditation rating.
- Dr. Sale further explained that the final version of these plans is still in flux. The Board will also have an opportunity to help finalize what the comprehensive, unified, long-range plans will look like through desk audits, periodic reviews, and guidance documents.
- Mrs. Holton noted that the comprehensive, unified, long-range plans would be school level that will be incorporated into the division level. She requested additional clarification of the school's responsibility and the school division's responsibility when developing these plans. She also questioned whether the school division has to approve the individual school's plan.
- Dr. Lane clarified that the school division does not always approve each school's plan. He recommended amending the language to state that the division plan should address how the division has allocated resources to improve the performance of all school groups to each school.
- Mrs. Holton questioned whether the guidance directs the divisions that its plan must identify how it allocated resources to improve student performance. VDOE staff explained that this requirement could be found in Standard Six of the Standards of Quality, which addresses division expectations. Staff will review the guidance to ensure that the responsibilities of schools and divisions are clearly delineated.
- Dr. Anderson asked if the proposed language provides clarity around whether it is intended to address successful outcomes for all students or all student groups.
- Mr. Gecker asked if success would be measured by eliminating or reducing achievement gaps among student groups. Mr. Gecker questioned if success will be measured by the higher-performing group staying where it was originally and lower performing student groups reducing the gap.
- Dr. Lane added that a goal is to move every school to the Level 1 standard. Additionally, even if the school is a Level 1 accredited school, schools should be able to show progress among all student groups. Mr. Gecker wants to ensure that the language offered in the amendments is clear to school administrators to understand the intent of the proposed plans. He wants to ensure that the proposed plan requirements and the data requirements are effective in showing the progress and advancement that the revised SOA intends.

- Dr. Durán suggested adding language that would give schools the goal of reaching Level 1 or Level 2 standards to ensure that all schools have the ability to achieve growth. Some schools may never reach Level 1 and should focus on further closing the gap.
- Dr. Wilson cautioned the Board not to overprescribe in a way that takes away the local divisions' responsibility to strive for achievements. She recommends an approach that lays a marker but allows divisions to be professional and strive advancing achievements.
- Mr. Gecker concurred that the Board should not prescribe means and methods but rather prescribe goals. If the local school divisions are doing well, the state should state back. However, if there are school divisions are not thriving for years, the state must step up to ensure students are being educated.
- Mrs. Holton requested affirmation that proficiency measures for college, career, and civic readiness currently exist but that the focus is on establishing an improvement rate. Schools must meet the proficiency level regardless. Mrs. Holton would recommend that improvement data be collected as soon as possible.

### **Committee Discussion & Approval of Special Committee Recommendations**

Dr. Wilson thanked staff and the committee for their work on the recommendations and opened the floor for committee discussion.

- Dr. Sale concluded that the tentative timeline is the presentation of the committee's final recommendations to the Board at the October 2021 meeting and the final review of the proposed recommendation during the November 2021 Board meeting.
- Dr. Durán asked if adopted by the Board when these recommendations would go into effect. Dr. Sale explained that upon Board approval, the proposed amendments would begin going through the regular regulatory process.

### **Concluding Remarks and Adjournment**

Dr. Wilson thanked the VDOE staff for their efforts. There being no further business, the meeting concluded its work at 3:36 p.m.