

DRAFT MINUTES
Virginia Board of Education
Special Committee to Review the Standards of Accreditation
Wednesday, November 18, 2020
2:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting

Welcome and Opening Comments

Pursuant to Chapter 1283 of the 2020 Acts of Assembly, the Virginia Board of Education (Board) convened in a virtual meeting of the Special Committee to Review the Standards of Accreditation (SOA) on November 18, 2020 at 2p.m. The meeting was open to the public via livestream on the [Virginia Department of Education \(VDOE\) YouTube webpage](#).

The following Committee members were present for the meeting: Pamela Davis-Vaught, Dr. Francisco Durán, Dr. Keisha Pexton, and Dr. Jamelle Wilson. The following Board members were also present: Mr. Dan Gecker, Ms. Anne Holton, and Dr. Tammy Mann. Dr. James Lane, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Emily Webb, Director of Board Relations for VDOE, were also present.

Opening and Approval of the Minutes

Dr. Pexton, chair of this committee, convened the meeting at 2:01 p.m. and welcomed Board members and staff to the meeting.

Dr. Durán made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 14, 2020 and meeting of the Special Committee to Review the Standards of Accreditation. Ms. Davis-Vaught seconded the motion. Dr. Pexton initiated a roll call vote.

Dr. Pexton recapped the presentations that the Committee has received since June, work to date, and work to come, as well as provided an overview of the agenda for the current meeting.

Discussion of the Committee's Work to Date, Key Themes, and Next Steps

Dr. Pexton noted that the focus of today's discussion would be would be key themes and takeaways, identifying gaps in information, and charting next steps. Dr. Pexton then opened the floor to the committee and other Board members present to discuss their initial observations and feedback from the Committee's work thus far.

- Dr. Wilson began with a general observation about the value of staff and key stakeholder presentations in this review process. Dr. Wilson noted the importance of continuing engagement with the field. Lastly, Dr. Wilson acknowledged the ongoing impact of pandemic and its longer-term implications for the Standards of Accreditation.
 - o Dr. Pexton added that the Committee had sought to keep COVID somewhat of a separate discussion, but recognizing its ongoing impact, it will require the Committee continue to hear from the field on broader implications.
- Dr. Durán noted a common theme of discussion was maintaining consistency and accountability in the education system. Among issues often raised by panelists as unintended consequences was chronic absenteeism as well as student achievement, overall performance, and the value of measuring growth, especially as it relates to English Learners. Dr. Durán reemphasized the need to stay connected with the field.
- Ms. Davis-Vaught valued the discussion about non-academic indicators. Ms. Davis-Vaught also requested additional conversation on thinking about school culture to ensure practices in place are having the intended effect on equity.
 - o Dr. Pexton clarified the meaning of school culture in this context and Ms. Davis-Vaught was referring to school climate. Ms. Davis-Vaught confirmed.

Dr. Pexton reminded the other Board members joining that their input is also welcomed.

- Ms. Holton added that she was encouraged by the generally positive feedback from superintendents.

Based on the discussion with superintendents, Dr. Wilson asked whether it was worth exploring and/or determining when there is a need for more substantive restructuring of the Standards of Accreditation if smaller adjustments have been exhausted or are inadequate.

Dr. Pexton asked the Committee and Board about whether they have adequate information on the following topics of interest:

- The two indicators not included in the 2017 revisions: (1) school climate; and (2) discipline and disproportional application.
- Concentrated discussion with the COVID task force.
- The College Career and Civic Readiness Index (CCCRI), especially ability to meet in this current climate.
- Movement to competency-based instruction.

Dr. Wilson requested more information competency vs. aged-based instruction, in part because of the unique circumstances of this current academic year.

- Dr. Durán echoed this request and noted the suggestion to review recommendations from the SOL Innovation Committee.

Ms. Holton inquired about whether the CCCRI had been discussed in depth and was curious to learn more about progress on the index. Ms. Holton also discussed folding some of the lessons and opportunities from COVID on longer-term changes, i.e. brick-and-mortar instruction, time-based requirements.

- Ms. Webb clarified that the CCCRI has not been covered in depth and noted staff can work on preparing an update.
- Dr. Lane also responded to the latter part of Ms. Holton's comment and noted a possible need to revisit time-based requirements, class sizes, and other items to determine relevance.
 - o Dr. Wilson expanded on making sure we reflect on how changes mitigate or exacerbate equity gaps.
- Mr. Gecker replied to the discussion noting the centrality of student outcomes, and framing these discussions in how they impact student achievement.
 - o Ms. Davis-Vaught replied she felt school climate is a broad measure of equity; these elements of the school experience enable, or prevent, students' learning.

Building from the school climate discussion, Dr. Pexton inquired about report on segregation and school boundary lines. Dr. Pexton commented on some of the notable findings as well as Virginia's potential to be exemplary in the space.

- Ms. Holton agreed the value of considering this and the Board's constitutional authority to hold divisions accountable for boundary decisions.
- Mr. Gecker added that the recent legislator briefing raised this discussion but Board authority is limited by consideration criteria, specifically the consent of the localities. Mr. Gecker highlighted the Board's requirement to report on division lines and its impact on the Standards of Quality.
- Dr. Mann supported further exploration of the topic, particularly as it relates to ensuring resources for the Standards of Quality.
- Dr. Wilson asked about whether this should be a responsibility of the Committee or the Board at large.
 - o Dr. Pexton replied that she believed it is a relevant discussion for the Committee's work but perhaps not directly under the purview of the Committee.

Dr. Pexton asked Committee and Board members to discuss whether the following topics had been adequately addressed in presentations.

- Growth measure not yet including 3rd grade
- Absence of teacher quality measures
- Effectiveness of resource allocation

Dr. Wilson requested to hear about growth measures overall. Ms. Davis-Vaught seconded the request.

Dr. Pexton revisited the original charter of the Committee to determine if there was any definitive topic, relative to the work of the Committee that merits a need for a recommendation.

- Dr. Durán highlighted the need to address the dropout rate indicator and implications for students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE).
 - o Relatedly, Ms. Davis-Vaught requested more information where SLIFE students are located and potential supports.
 - o Ms. Webb noted current data limitations and next steps for providing the Board more information.
 - o Dr. Lane added some information on next steps for definition development and data collection.

Dr. Pexton summarized a tentative workplan for 2021 and items for continued consideration: iterative versus wholesale changes to the SOA; competency versus age-based models; existing equity gaps and how any changes would have perpetual impact; working in tandem with the Board on school boundaries, as it informs work with the SOA; growth measures; attendance; school climate; SLIFE/SIFE students; CCCRI update; incorporating lessons learned from COVID; and virtual learning standards.

- Dr. Durán highlighted a connection between school climate and chronic absenteeism.
- Ms. Holton clarified that iterative versus whole changes may be more of a “both/and” approach.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.