

DRAFT MINUTES
Virginia Board of Education
Standing Committee on the Standards of Quality
Wednesday, June 19, 2019
2:00 p.m.
Jefferson Conference Room, James Monroe Building
101 North 14th Street, Richmond, Virginia

Welcome and Opening Comments

The following Board of Education (Board) members were present for the June 19, 2019 meeting of the Committee on the Standards of Quality: Diane Atkinson, Dr. Francisco Durán, Daniel Gecker, Anne Holton, Elizabeth Lodal, Dr. Keisha Pexton, Dr. Tamara Wallace, and Dr. Jamelle Wilson. Dr. James Lane, Superintendent of Public Instruction, was also present. Kim Adkins was absent.

Mr. Gecker, chair of this committee, convened the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Public Comment

Mr. Gecker opened the floor to public comment. No individuals requested to address the committee.

Presentation: Update on the Standards of Quality Focus Group Meetings and Other Public Engagement Activities

Link to presentation: [Update on the Standards of Quality Focus Group Meetings and Other Public Engagement Activities](#) (PPT)

Emily Webb, Director of Board Relations for the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), presented an overview of the Standards of Quality (SOQ) focus group meetings and other public engagements that Board members participated in throughout the Commonwealth. These meetings and engagements included:

- Virginia Public Education Coalition Monthly Meeting – April 9, 2019 and June 10, 2019
- VASS Conference – May 7, 2019
- Smyth County (Region 7) – May 9, 2019
- Prince Edward County (Region 8) – May 14, 2019
- Prince William County (Region 4) – May 21, 2019
- York County (Region 2) – May 29, 2019
- Education Partners (Richmond) – June 6, 2019

Ms. Webb reviewed the common themes that were expressed by stakeholders and members of the public at these meetings and engagements.

One Board member asked for more information on how the changes to the Virginia Retirement System have impacted teacher attraction and retention.

Ms. Webb noted that one area of concern from stakeholders was regarding the fairness of targeted compensation adjustments for certain teachers. Board members discussed this issue and how these concerns could be addressed.

Presentation: Overview of Revisions to the Draft Standards of Quality Proposals

Link to presentation materials: [Draft Standards of Quality Proposals for Consideration](#) (Word)

Zachary Robbins, Director of Policy for VDOE, presented to the Board the draft revisions to the SOQ. The proposed revisions included:

- Targeted Compensation Adjustments
 - Establish provisions in the SOQ to provide targeted compensation adjustments for proficient, experienced teachers to teach in challenged schools
 - Require school divisions to equitably distribute experienced and inexperienced teachers among all schools
- At-Risk Add-On
 - Move the At-Risk Add-On into the SOQ
 - Reform the program to distribute additional positions and provide targeted incentives for experienced teachers to teach in high poverty schools
- Teacher Leader and Teacher Mentor Programs
 - Establish a new Teacher Leader program
 - Expand the Teacher Mentor program
 - Provide additional compensation and time for Teacher Leaders and Teacher Mentors
- English Learner (EL) Teachers
 - Amend the staffing requirements for EL teachers to distribute positions based upon student proficiency levels, while maintaining local flexibility in deploying those positions.
 - Staffing ratio ranges from 1:25 for least proficient, to 1:58 for most proficient
- Specialized Student Support Personnel
 - Remove the school nurse, school social worker, and school psychologist positions from the SOQ support position category
 - Create a new staffing category for these positions – “specialized student support personnel” – to be staffed at four positions per 1000 students

- School Counselors
 - Reaffirm the Board of Education’s 2016 recommendation to provide one-full time school counselor for every 250 students
- Elementary School Principals
 - Reaffirm the Board of Education’s 2016 recommendation to provide one-full time principal in every school
- Assistant Principals
 - Reaffirm the Board of Education’s 2016 recommendation to provide one full-time assistant principal for each 400 students
- Elimination of Recession-Era Savings and Flexibility Strategies
 - Reaffirm the Board of Education’s 2016 recommendation to eliminate the measures that were implemented during the recession: the “support position cap” and the temporary flexibility language waiving certain staffing requirements

One Board member requested information on allocating At-Risk Add-On funding to individual schools, rather than divisions. In response to Board member questions, Mr. Robbins explained that moving At-Risk Add-On funding into the SOQ would not change the localities’ responsibility to match those funds – however, the funding would become mandatory and school divisions would no longer be able to “opt out” of receiving it.

One Board member asked how “free and reduced price lunch” and “economically disadvantaged” differ as measures of poverty. Mr. Robbins explained that the Community Eligibility Program (CEP) has impacted the available data on poverty, which accounts for differences in the two measures. Board members asked for more information on how using each of these measures would impact the potential SOQ proposals. Mr. Robbins noted that “economically disadvantaged” would encompass more students overall, but this measure still fails to capture a significant number of students experiencing poverty.

One Board member asked how an “experienced” teacher would be defined for the purposes of At-Risk Add-On funding. Mr. Robbins stated that, in absence of a measure of “quality” for teachers, experience was selected as a substitute for quality. The current proposal provides school divisions with the flexibility to define “experienced” (i.e. three years of teaching experience, five years of teaching experience, etc.).

Board members discussed the overall goals for the SOQ proposals. One Board member suggested that moving the At-Risk Add-On funding into the SOQ does not address equity as effectively as the targeted compensation adjustments.

Board members discussed the time allocated for mentorship under the current proposal. Board members expressed concern about the impact of school divisions having to hire additional

teachers to cover the time allocated to mentoring. This cost was not calculated into the cost projection for this proposal. Board members emphasized the importance of having time allocated outside the classroom each week for mentoring for both the mentor and the mentee.

Board members asked what data was used to formulate the proposed ratios for teacher mentorship and teacher leaders. Ms. Webb stated that staff worked with the Education Commission of the States (ECS) and the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center (ARCC) to analyze data from other states for many of the SOQ proposals. Mr. Robbins noted that teacher leader data was particularly challenging to find. Board members emphasized the importance of requiring allocated weekly time for mentorship in the proposed ratios.

One Board member discussed the significant differences in ability within levels of English Language (EL) proficiency, stressing the unique challenges of Students with Limited and Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE). Mr. Robbins noted that VDOE does not currently collect data on SLIFE students.

One Board member asked if the estimated cost of the specialized student support personnel was included in the estimated cost of eliminating the recession era savings and flexibility. Ed Lanza, Director of Budgeting for VDOE, addressed the Board, explaining that the estimated cost of these two proposals is partially duplicative for positions that already exist within the SOQ. But, Mr. Lanza also noted that some of the cost for specialized student support personnel would be new expenses for positions not currently funded in the SOQ.

Board members discussed the need for flexibility in mandating specialized student support personnel. Several Board members expressed concern about mandating specific positions (e.g. registered nurses, school psychologists) that small, rural, or high-poverty school divisions would be unable to provide. One Board member noted that requests for mandated ratios for specific credentials, like registered nurses, typically come from nurses and nursing organizations, not from division superintendents or principals. Dr. Lane stated that the Virginia Education Association (VEA) was supportive of requiring school nurses to have the registered nurse credential. Ms. Webb noted that, under this proposal, school divisions would be free to set their own criteria regarding specific credentialing above what is required in the SOQ.

Board members discussed adding principal mentorship to the current SOQ proposals. One Board member noted that principals are responsible for hiring and assignment decisions for teachers, thus, it is essential to include principal mentorship in the current SOQ proposals.

Dr. Lane suggested that the Board consider adding proposals to this SOQ review for: (i) certain special education staffing ratios, such as Speech Language Pathologists; (ii) class size reduction for kindergarten through 8th grade; and (iii) elementary school reading specialists.

One Board member suggested adding a proposal to reflect the Board's work on Profile of a Virginia Graduate, such as mandating a Work-Based Learning Coordinator to function as a liaison to the business community. Dr. Lane noted that one fulltime Work-Based Learning Coordinator could be shared across several small school divisions.

One Board member discussed the Board's constitutional duty to certify a list of qualified individuals for division superintendent positions. Board members discussed this constitutional duty and ways in which the Board has fulfilled this duty in the past.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

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