

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
BOARD OF EDUCATION
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA
September 17, 2020**

Pursuant to Chapter 1283 of the 2020 Acts of Assembly, the Virginia Board of Education convened in a virtual meeting on Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 10 a.m.

The meeting was open to the public for listening and viewing and livestreamed on the VDOE YouTube channel. Oral public comment was not accepted; however, written public comment was accepted on the Board's email account at BOE@doe.virginia.gov and posted on the Board's website at <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/2020/09-sep/agenda-091720.shtml>.

Mr. Gecker called the meeting to order at 10 a.m.

Board Roll Call:

Mr. Daniel Gecker, President
Dr. Jamelle Wilson, Vice President
Ms. Pamela Davis-Vaught
Dr. Francisco Durán
Ms. Anne Holton
Dr. Tammy Mann
Dr. Keisha Pexton

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dr. Durán made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of July 22 and July 23, 2020. The motion was seconded by Ms. Davis-Vaught and carried unanimously by Board roll call.

Board Roll Call:

Mr. Daniel Gecker - aye
Ms. Pamela Davis-Vaught - aye
Dr. Francisco Durán - aye
Ms. Anne Holton - aye
Dr. Tammy Mann - aye
Dr. Keisha Pexton - aye
Dr. Jamelle Wilson - aye

Mr. Gecker welcomed the Board members, staff and the public to the Board of Education virtual meeting. He stated that the meeting is open to the public via livestream on the department's webpage and YouTube channel. Oral public comment would not be accepted due to the limitations of the platform, however written comments as of 5 p.m. the day before were accepted

and posted on the meeting webpage for viewing.

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Final Review of Proposed Board of Education Meeting Dates for 2021.

B. Final Review of Nomination for Vacancy on the State Special Education Advisory Committee (SSEAC)

Dr. Durán made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Mann and carried unanimously by Board roll call vote.

Board Roll Call:

Mr. Daniel Gecker – aye
Ms. Pamela Davis-Vaught - aye
Dr. Francisco Durán - aye
Ms. Anne Holton - aye
Dr. Tammy Mann - aye
Dr. Keisha Pexton – aye
Dr. Jamelle Wilson – aye

ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

C. Final Review of Resolution Prescribing the Standards of Quality for Public Schools in Virginia

Holly Coy, assistant superintendent of policy, equity, and communications, presented this item to the Board for final review.

The *Constitution of Virginia* (Article VIII, § 2) sets out the Board of Education's responsibility to determine and prescribe the standards of quality for the public schools of Virginia, subject to revision only by the General Assembly. These standards, found in the *Code of Virginia at § 22.1-253.13:1 through 22.1-253.13:10*, are known as the Standards of Quality (SOQ) and provide the foundational program for public education in Virginia as well as serve as a primary driver of state educational funding. *Section 22.1-18.01 of the Code* further requires the Board to biennially review the SOQ and propose amendments as necessary.

Ms. Coy reported that this item was presented as first review to the Board at their meeting on July 23, 2020. Following that review, a public comment window was opened to solicit feedback. A public notice about the public comment window was issued on August 2, 2020 and the comment window closed on August 28, 2020. A total of six public comments were received. While some comments offered possible revisions and additions to the Board's SOQ, no comments were received in opposition of the Board's proposed prescriptions.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommended that the Board of Education approve the *Resolution Prescribing the Standards of Quality* and directs VDOE staff to transmit the prescribed Standards of Quality to the Governor and General Assembly.

Dr. Wilson made a motion to approve the *Resolution Prescribing the Standards of Quality* and directed staff to transmit to the Governor and General Assembly. The motion was seconded by Ms. Holton and carried unanimously by Board roll call vote.

Board Roll Call:

Mr. Daniel Gecker – aye
Ms. Pamela Davis-Vaught - aye
Dr. Francisco Durán - aye
Ms. Anne Holton – aye
Dr. Tammy Mann - aye
Dr. Keisha Pexton – aye
Dr. Jamelle Wilson – aye

D. Final Review of Proposed State Approved Textbooks for K-12 Science

Dr. Anne Petersen, science coordinator, office of STEM & innovation, presented this item to the Board for final review.

Dr. Petersen stated that it is the Board’s responsibility to approve textbooks for use in Virginia’s public schools, supporting the need for alignment of textbooks with the state’s academic standards to ensure a solid foundation for student success.

In September 2018, the Board approved the 2018 Science Standards of Learning and Curriculum Framework. These standards and the curriculum framework were revised to provide students opportunities to engage in deeper learning through allowing greater student ownership in the discovery process and to provide opportunities for place based learning. Place based learning allows teachers to construct lessons that reflect the culture and community of the division thus making science more relevant and accessible to students. Local school divisions are expected to fully implement the 2018 Science Standards of Learning during the 2022-2023 school year and are awaiting a Board approved list in order to adopt and purchase necessary textbooks.

In July, the Department of Education brought to the Board a list of proposed science textbooks for initial review. A 30-day public comment period was advertised through a Superintendent’s Memo, Teacher Direct, Science Update, and through Virginia science organizations to provide stakeholders an opportunity to view the proposed textbooks and to provide feedback to the Department of Education. At the request of the Board, an additional level of scrutiny was applied to the proposed textbooks allowing stakeholders to provide feedback on the textbooks using an equity lens. Dr. Petersen provided a summary of the feedback from both the public comment and equity review processes as well as the list of proposed recommended K-12 science textbooks to the Board for final review.

During the 30-day public comment period, the Department received comments from 27 individuals in the state. These individuals included teachers, parents, and science leaders. A majority of these comments were positive responses to specific texts within a grade level. Comments overall were very positive with only one negative comment concerning an older version of the proposed digital text.

At the request of the Board during the July 23, 2020 meeting, statements were generated that focused on both equity and the VDOE vision for science instruction. These statements were reviewed by our supervisors and, upon approval, were placed in a survey that allowed reviewers to respond to the statements using a Likert scale. Opportunity was also provided to allow for more in depth comments. Once the survey was constructed, the VDOE science team sought participants to conduct this review. The textbook review team that was part of the initial review, Institutes of Higher Education, to include education and equity personnel from VCU, W&M and UVA, and science supervisors from Norfolk, Richmond, and Greenville were asked to be a part of the process. Twenty-three people were willing to conduct this extra layer of review and submitted a total of 162 responses.

Dr. Petersen reported in elementary, the images in the texts overall reflected opportunities for students to see themselves, their culture, and their community, although at times, images of humans were limited. The focus of many of the images in some of the texts, particularly at the upper elementary grades, was on content. All texts provide opportunities for students to “do science” as they engage in scientific and engineering practices. The nature of science was reflected in the books; however, this question was difficult to address at lower grade levels since students are only introduced to the tenets of the nature of science as cognitively appropriate for the age level.

At the secondary level, many of the texts focused solely on science content. Images focused on concepts vs on human images. As with elementary, there were opportunities to allow students to “do science” and engage in scientific and engineering practices were plentiful. At the conclusion of the secondary review focused on equity, stakeholders and the VDOE science team did not yield anything that would prohibit books from being on the Approved Science Textbook list.

Dr. Petersen added although it is important to have textbooks and other resources that reflect the cultures and communities within Virginia, the VDOE science team views these resources as a tool that teachers may use with instruction. The goal is to provide teachers and leaders with an understanding that the tool alone does not ensure a classroom promotes Deeper Learning for all students. The next steps are to provide professional development on how to use textbooks as well as resources in the development and implementation of quality science instruction. The quest for equitable science instruction for all students in Virginia must continue to be emphasized in all of our work moving forward.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommended that the Board of Education approve the list of recommended textbooks for K-12 science.

Ms. Holton made a motion to approve the textbooks list with one exception, the Virginia Elevated Six Grade textbook, and asked the department to reach out to publisher to offer an opportunity to update the images and bring this textbook back when and if revisions were completed to satisfaction. The motion was seconded by Dr. Durán and carried unanimously by Board roll call vote.

Board Roll Call:

Mr. Daniel Gecker – aye

Ms. Pamela Davis-Vaught - aye

Dr. Francisco Durán - aye

Ms. Anne Holton – aye
Dr. Tammy Mann - aye
Dr. Keisha Pexton – aye
Dr. Jamelle Wilson – aye

Ms. Holton requested that the Board review and revise the textbook review process to ensure an equity lens from the beginning. Additionally, it was requested that the textbook scoring rubric be sent to the Board for review.

E. Report from the Governor’s Commission on African American History Education in Virginia

Dr. Rosa Atkins, Commission Chair & Superintendent of Charlottesville City Schools, Dr. Derrick Alridge, Professor of Education and Director of the Center for Race and Public Education in the South, Curry School of Education and Human Development, University of Virginia and Dr. Cassandra Newby-Alexander, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Professor of History, Norfolk State University, presented this report to the Board.

On August 24th, 2019 at Old Point Comfort, the site where the first enslaved Africans arrived on Virginia shores 400 years earlier, Governor Ralph Northam signed Executive Order Thirty Nine and announced the establishment of the Virginia African American History Education Commission. The Governor charged the Commission with thoroughly examining the Commonwealth’s K-12 curricula, professional development practices, and instructional supports to make recommendations for improving the way African American history is taught in Virginia schools.

Dr. Newby-Alexander chaired the Standards subcommittee and Dr. Atkins served as co-chair and Commission facilitator. The Commission was comprised of educators, historians, museum curators, school board members, faith leaders, school administrators, teachers, and citizens across the Commonwealth. Other key leadership included Virginia’s Secretary of Education Atif Qarni and Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. James Lane. A complete list of Commissioners is available here: <https://www.education.virginia.gov/initiatives/aahec/>.

Dr. Atkins opened with a brief report on African American history.

Dr. Newby-Alexander reported that the Standards subcommittee had three major objectives as it relates to Virginia’s History and Social Science Standards. This included:

- Making recommendations for technical edits to the Virginia’s History and Social Science Standards of Learning (SOL)
- Identifying how the standards can be organized and improved to provide a more comprehensive picture of the African American story
- Making recommendations on how Virginia can improve the standards revisions process itself.

The subcommittee had an expansive charge that required three separate workgroups that then reported to the larger committee for review and approval. The subcommittee invested countless hours, pouring over the Standards of Learning, the process for revising the standards, and

reviewing the technical edits. The subcommittee recommended changing the way history and social science courses order their knowledge and recommended a thematic approach to teaching content so that students can more easily make connections and apply knowledge to their modern context. Finally, the subcommittee concluded that in order for students to develop a deeper understanding and comprehension of African American history in the larger narrative that learning must begin at the Kindergarten level, with a dedicated time to teaching history.

Dr. Newby-Alexander summarized the recommended changes provided by the Technical Edits Workgroup as follows:

- The elementary-level language was changed to make it is more inclusive, covers diverse backgrounds, and highlights African American neighborhoods so that students can become acquainted with the importance of community history.
- Important historical figures with diverse perspectives and contributions to the history and culture of Virginia and the United States were included throughout the curriculum so it is up to date and contains a range of African Americans to whom students can relate.
- Terms and content relevant to African American history are introduced in earlier grades.
- Information added and corrected in the U.S. history curriculum on the topics of slavery, the abolitionist movement, the Civil War, Reconstruction, lynching, and other important matters in African American history that had been omitted or distorted.

The Standards Overhaul Workgroup looked more cohesively at the standards as a whole, reviewing the organization of Virginia standards and recommended developing a curriculum framework that addressed 10 key concepts that ensure African American history is not segregated from U.S. history in general. The Standards Overhaul Workgroup also recommended the revision or elimination of standards that are inaccurate or out of date and the securing of funds for professional development to equip educators to teach to the new standards after they are implemented.

The Process Revision Workgroup made the following recommendations:

- Expand the number of educators and external content experts so that a wide range of experiences, cultural perspectives, and pedagogical preferences are represented from across the Commonwealth to contribute to development of the standards
- Convene a steering committee comprising of external content experts and the practitioners to review and revise the content recommended in the standards process.
- Provide outreach to encourage parents, students, educators, and administrators across the Commonwealth to provide feedback on the proposed standards as part of the public comment process.
- Ensure that all comments, perspectives, events are thoroughly vetted and determine next steps on how to revise inaccurate content in the standards of learning and curriculum frameworks.
- Secure funds for expanding the educator and external committees

Dr. Alridge provided recommendations from the Professional Development subcommittee.

The Professional Development subcommittee developed six priority legislative recommendations to ensure Virginia educators achieve proficiency in culturally relevant teaching and gain appropriate foundational knowledge in African American history. Those recommendations are to:

1. Revise Virginia's Teacher Evaluation Regulations and Virginia's Uniform Performance standards for School Leaders to include cultural proficiency efficacy.
2. Require every Virginia educator to certify that they have enrolled in Cultural Competency Professional Development by 2022.
3. Allocate funding and personnel resources to develop and implement comprehensive professional development in the areas of cultural competency and African American History content for Virginia educators.
4. Mandate certification (Continuing Education Units) in African American History for all holders of education licenses issued by the Virginia Department of Education (this includes initial licensure and renewals).
5. Amend requirements for licensure endorsements in History/Social Science to require evidence of course study in African American History.
6. Require a credit in African American History as a new requirement for graduation in Virginia. The new elective course in African American History developed by VDOE and WHRO could be used to fulfill this requirement.

Dr. Alridge stated that a minimum criteria for state approved professional development in the following areas is needed:

- Culturally Relevant Teaching: Acquisition of curriculum and pedagogical knowledge
- Cultural Proficiency: Mastery of knowledge
- Culturally Responsive Teaching: Application of knowledge
- Anti-Racist Education: Strategies
- African American History: Content and Pedagogy

Dr. Alridge discussed the expectations for Virginia's educator workforce to support the effective delivery of professional development and are framed into four quadrants, detailing a summary of each:

- culturally responsive schools
- culturally responsive leadership
- culturally responsive educators
- culturally responsive pedagogy

Dr. Alridge highlighted the general recommendations such as to:

- Broaden the teaching pipeline to seek out and train diverse teachers.
- Enhance Virginia's School Climate Survey to include evaluation of Culturally Responsive School Climate and report these outcomes on Virginia's School Quality Profiles.
- Develop models for training about implicit bias and culturally-responsive pedagogy.
- Develop a model anti-racism educator policy approved by the Virginia Board of Education.
- Develop guidelines for Culturally Responsive Teaching and Culturally Responsive Practice in Virginia. These guidelines should be informed by the profiles developed by the Commission and developed in consultation with a list of experts and researchers recommended by the Subcommittee

On August 31, 2020 the Commission presented their final report to the Governor for improving the way African American history is taught in Virginia schools, including but not limited to:

- Making recommendations and technical edits for enriched standards related to African American history;
- Identifying how the standards can be organized and improved to ensure that African American history is a cohesive part of the teaching of all history;
- Revising of the full history and social studies standards review process to be more inclusive of diverse perspectives; and
- Recommending the addition of professional development and instructional supports to equip all educators to create and sustain culturally responsive pedagogy and gain appropriate foundational knowledge in African American history.

Several board members thanked Dr. Adkins, Dr. Newby-Alexander, Dr. Alridge and all members of the commission for their presentation, leadership, recommendations and the work to prepare the comprehensive report. Additionally, they discussed the need for teacher training and outreach to parents.

F. First Review of the Recommendations for Technical Edits from the Governor’s Commission on African American History Education in Virginia

Ms. Christonya Brown, history and social science coordinator, presented this item to the Board for first review.

Ms. Brown thanked Dr. Adkins, the commission leadership and team members for their hard work on developing recommendations for the Board to consider. She also thanked Dr. Lane, the leadership team and staff of Learning and Innovation, Policy, Equity and Communications and Student Assessment, whom collectively reviewed and compiled the recommended edits.

Ms. Brown provided a brief timeline of the Commission’s work to the Board.

The Commission’s work began on October 28, 2019. It divided into two self-selected subcommittees: Standards and Professional Development. The self-selected subcommittee were divided into three workgroups: Process, Standards Reorganization and Technical Edits. Each subcommittee developed and approved recommendations for the Commission’s final report, which was presented to the governor in late August 2020.

The Departments of Learning and Innovation, Policy, Equity, and Communications, and Student Assessment reviewed recommendations from the Commission to compile the documents outlining the recommended edits. The Superintendent and senior leadership reviewed the documents which included:

- Original language from the Curriculum Framework (2015)
- Edits as recommended by the Commission
- The type of edit and VDOE suggestions
- Recommended action

The recommendations outlined were organized into two categories for Board consideration:

- Category One: Board Decision - Edits to the Curriculum Framework for Board action.

- Category Two: Considerations for the SOL review and revision process beginning in 2021, which included substantive changes to content or additions to the Standards of Learning.

Ms. Brown stated that department staff may make additional changes that would incorporate recommendations presented in Category Two into Category One.

Ms. Brown provided examples of recommended edits in the curriculum framework of United States History to 1865 that would be listed in Category One. She also provided example of recommended edits in US History for high school that would be listed in Category Two.

Ms. Brown stated that the department's next steps will be to present curriculum framework documents to the Board reflecting the Commission's recommendations. Following Board approval, the department will communicate edits to school divisions through a Superintendent's Memo, continue resource development to reflect edits and provide a variety of professional development to reflect changes.

Ms. Brown provided a list of selected bibliography that was used as resources for technical edits by the Commission.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommended that the Board of Education receive for first review the recommendations from the Governor's Commission on African American History Education in Virginia.

Dr. Lane thanked Ms. Brown for her presentation and also thanked the Commission for their report. He also wanted to reiterate that if a recommended change from Category Two is placed in Category One, it's a matter of form and process in assessing each recommendation and its appropriate placement. He stated that he is very appreciative of the Commission's recommendations and hard work from staff.

Dr. Durán asked for additional clarification on professional development activities available to teachers and what accountability measures would be put in place. Ms. Brown answered that Dr. Newby-Alexander would be teaching an African American History course to K-12 teachers next month. This session will be recorded and available to all of our teachers. She shared that additional history professors will be providing PD sessions for teachers to learn content. Ms. Brown further explained that the VDOE History and Social Science office has started a professional development series title "Building a Community of Learners" partnering with many of Virginia's museums to develop resources.

Dr. Lane stated that accountability will be a focus in teacher evaluation. Dr. Atkins also stated that PD requirements could be incorporated into teacher licensure renewal.

Dr. Wilson thanked Ms. Brown and the Commission on their work and acknowledged their commitment to process in ensuring the recommended edits are reviewed and move forward.

Ms. Holton spoke on the many public comments received by the Board and stated that the majority were supportive of the Commission's recommendations. She also encouraged the Board to consider public input and feedback when edits from Category Two are moved into Category

One.

The Board accepted this item on first review.

G. First Review of an Amendment to Virginia’s Consolidated State Plan under the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) – Amendment 4

Julie Molique, director, office of accountability and Dr. Lynn Sodat, director, office of ESEA programs, presented this item to the Board for first review.

Ms. Molique reported Virginia’s Consolidated State Plan addresses a variety of federal compliance topics. The intention of the plan was to be a living document where adjustments through amendments may be necessary as work evolves. The proposed amendment to Virginia’s ESSA plan addresses three changes.

Ms. Molique explained the first change involves the exemption that ESSA provides surrounding students in 8th grade who are enrolled in Algebra I. These students are allowed to take the Algebra I mathematics assessment, instead of the grade level assessment since Algebra I is a higher level assessment. Virginia has received a waiver to extend this exemption to all students, starting at grade 3, who are enrolled in advanced courses allowing them to take the advance mathematics assessment in lieu of the grade level assessment. However, if a student takes advantage of this exemption, the student is required to then take a higher level mathematics test in high school to meet the federal mathematics assessment requirements.

The proposed Amendment does NOT seek to change this exemption. The current plan states that students must pass the Algebra I SOL test in grade 8 to then use a higher level mathematics assessment in high school for federal requirements. This amendment would change that language to indicate that the student must take, not necessarily pass, the Algebra I SOL test in grade 8 to then use a higher level math assessment in HS. This technical change will clarify expectations for students who may have passed the Algebra I course in grade 8 but took and did not pass the Algebra I SOL assessment, it also allows consistency in expectations for students who also take the Geometry or Algebra II SOL tests in middle school as detailed in Virginia’s Advanced Mathematics Waiver.

Dr. Sodat explained the next two amendments as housekeeping changes that must be submitted to U.S. Department of Education. The second change is the update to The Title I, Part C, portion of the ESSA state plan that includes the state’s measurable objectives for the Title I, Part C, program. These objectives are updated periodically, and were updated in 2020 following the completion of a comprehensive needs assessment and development of a new service delivery plan for the program. The amendment will direct the U.S. Department of Education to the Virginia Department of Education’s Title I, Part C, webpage to access the current objectives for this program.

Dr. Sodat explained the third amendment is an addition to the language in Title IV, Part A, Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant Addition of Acceptable Use. The amendment expands the list of state-level activities supported by Title IV, Part A funds to include support for school divisions in identifying and addressing technology readiness needs, technology infrastructure and access, internet connectivity, data security, data privacy, and E-rate

participation. These uses of funds are allowable; however, the U.S. Department of Education has indicated that Virginia will need to amend the ESSA state plan to include them prior to using state set-aside funds for these purposes.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommended the Board of Education receive for first review the amendment to the consolidated state plan.

The Board accepted this item on first review.

H. First Review of a Process to Certify a List of Qualified Persons for the Office of Division Superintendents of Schools

Mrs. Patty S. Pitts, assistant superintendent for teacher education and licensure, presented this item to the Board for first review.

The *Constitution of Virginia* requires the Board of Education to certify to the school board of each division a list of qualified persons for the office of division superintendent of schools, one of whom shall be selected to fill the post by the division school board.

Prior to 1993, the Board did not issue a Division Superintendent License. The names of individuals who met requirements for appointment as a division superintendent were placed on a "List of Eligible Superintendents." Individuals submitted an application for the "List of Eligible Superintendents." An application, transcripts, and letters of recommendation were required. If individuals met the requirements, their names were presented to the Board for certification and added to the list. Periodically, a "Status Report" was sent to individuals whose names were on the list to request information, such as updated addresses, additional college preparation and professional experience completed, and whether they wanted their names to remain on the list. An issue arise when individuals went to another state and did not have a license or credentials to show that they were eligible for the license. In 1993, the process of the Board certifying a list of qualified persons for the office of division superintendent during Board meetings was discontinued when the Board established the Division Superintendent License. On behalf of the Board, the Department of Education issued Division Superintendent Licenses, and the "List of Eligible Superintendents" was comprised of the names of individuals who held an active Division Superintendent License.

Mrs. Pitts explained four options in which an individual is eligible to receive a Division Superintendent License as well experience in teaching, supervision and administration:

- Option 1 - Must have an Doctorate in educational leadership
- Option 2 - Requires to have a Masters, eligible for the administration and supervision endorsement, 30 graduate hours beyond the date the Master's degree was confer
- Option 3 - Requires an out-state division license

- Option 4 - When a school board has elected a candidate, who does not meet options 1 – 3, but has a Master’s Degree, minimum of 3 years of successful experience in a senior leadership position, such as CEO or military officer, recommendation from school board.

Mrs. Pitts stated that these options will change with the proposed process. The proposed process to certify a list of qualified persons for the Office of Division Superintendents of Schools is as follows:

- The department will initially bring to the Board a list of individuals with active division superintendent license to ask the Board to certify those individuals.
- New applicants will be reviewed by the department and those names will be brought to the Board to certify. Once the Board has certified those individuals, Teacher Licensure office will issue the division superintendent license.
- The timeline of certification and receipt of the application will determine the issuing of the license

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommended that the Board of Education receive for first review the process to certify a list of qualified persons for the office of division superintendents of schools.

Dr. Wilson asked for clarification on the new process, that the individual will not receive their Division Superintendent License until the Board certifies the list. Mrs. Pitts stated that Dr. Wilson’s assessment was accurate, once the Board certifies the list of names, the individual will immediately receive their license.

Dr. Durán asked how individuals would be added to the list in the event that the Board does not meet that month and there is an immediate need for the superintendent to start in their division. Mrs. Pitts explained that there could be a delay in individuals receiving their license until the Board approves the list but that individuals should be encouraged to apply early. Dr. Durán asked for additional clarification. Mrs. Pitts stated that an individual would need to be certified on the eligible list before officially receiving an appointment as division superintendent. Dr. Durán shared concerns that the timeline could delay a superintendent starting in their new position. Dr. Lane stated that it is a constitutional requirement of the Board to certify this list. Dr. Durán recommended that candidates considering applying to be a superintendent must be made aware of this new process to ensure there is not a delay.

Dr. Mann and Ms. Holton asked for clarification and expressed concern about this process being held in open session rather than executive session. Dr. Lane responded that there is not an exemption in the Freedom of Information Act to vote on this item in executive session.

Ms. Holton encouraged staff to reach out to the Virginia School Boards Association and other stakeholder groups to see if there are concerns or suggestions to this process. Mrs. Pitts stated that she would be in contact with VSBA for feedback.

The Board accepted this item on first review.

I. First Review of Proposed Revisions to the Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students

Michael Bolling, assistant superintendent, department of learning and innovation, presented this item to the Board for first review.

The last comprehensive review of the *Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students* occurred in 2010, with the revisions implemented starting in 2012. In 2018, the Board charged the Virginia Advisory Committee for the Education of the Gifted (VACEG) with reviewing policies and programming practices that supported equitable access to gifted programs. In July 2019, the VACEG presented their report to the Board. Following their report, the VACEG began to review the regulations and proposed changes that aligned with their report. In addition, House Bill 1139 (Keam) passed the 2020 General Assembly that requires the Board to review the regulations and make changes for more equitable screening and identification of gifted students. The proposed changes align with the requirements of HB1139. Representatives of VACEG contributed to the proposed revised regulations over a two-year timeframe. Members consisted of parents, superintendents, gifted education coordinators, teachers, and college faculty.

The proposed revisions to the regulations include:

1. Additions to and revisions of definitions for critical terms;
2. Realignment of aspects of the screening, referral, identification, and placement components of the regulations to support best practices aligning with equitable access for gifted students, especially students from underrepresented populations;
3. Revision of components of the local plan for the education of the gifted;
4. Revision of the role and function of the local advisory committee for the education of the gifted; and
5. Addition of annual report expectations.

The proposed revisions to the regulations will allow the Board to update and guide school division identification procedures and services for gifted education. Revisions to the annual report will serve to highlight and communicate to division's progress towards equitable representation and services in their gifted program.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommended the Board of Education receive for first review the proposed revisions to the *Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students* (Proposed Stage).

Dr. Wilson stated that it would be helpful to provide a list of VACEG members and the communities they represent who contributed to the proposed revisions.

Ms. Holton asked for clarification on the annual report and if it would include setting goals or a process for achieving the goals of equitable access. Dr. Poland responded that there are some goals within the current plan that address certain aspects but does not necessarily address equitable access of student groups.

Ms. Holton responded that the Board should think about whether to include a requirement that gifted programs include goals and a plan to ensure equitable access and annually work toward those goals outlined in the plan.

Ms. Davis-Vaught asked for more information about what each division is doing for their gifted programs.

Dr. Durán asked for clarification on how the revisions can enhance the identification of gifted visual/performing arts students. Dr. Poland stated that the current revisions do not differentiate identification of gifted students in visual/performing arts.

Dr. Wilson stated it would be helpful to provide a template for divisions to use to complete their annual report. Dr. Poland responded that the current regulations require an annual report but do not specify what is included in the annual report.

The Board accepted this item on first review.

J. First Review of Recommendations for School Divisions of Innovation (SDI) Designation

Michael Bolling, assistant superintendent, department of learning and innovation, presented this item to the Board for first review.

The 2017 Virginia General Assembly approved House Bill 1981, directing the Board to develop regulations for the designation of School Division of Innovation (SDI). To be eligible for designation, a local school board would submit a plan of innovation according to Board criteria as presented in the regulations. The legislation defined “innovation” as a new or creative alternative to existing instructional or innovative practices or school structures that evidence-based practice suggests will be effective in improving student learning and educational performance. A SDI is defined as a school division in which the local school board has developed and for which the Board has approved a plan of innovation to improve student learning; educational performance; and college, career, and citizenship readiness skills in one or more schools for the benefit of all schools in the school division. School division’s applications were evaluated by teams of VDOE staff who served on teams that provided multiple evaluations of school division applications using

a detailed rubric. Based on this document, fifteen school divisions were recommended to be approved by the Board as School Divisions of Innovation.

Mr. Bolling reported the following list of school divisions recommended for the School Division of Innovation Designation:

- Buchanan County Public Schools
- Goochland County Public Schools
- Hampton City Public Schools
- Henrico County Public Schools
- Hopewell City Public Schools
- Loudoun County Public Schools
- Middlesex County Public Schools
- Montgomery County Public Schools
- Poquoson City Public Schools
- Roanoke County Public Schools
- Salem City Public Schools
- Staunton City Public Schools
- Virginia Beach City Public Schools
- West Point Public Schools
- York County Public Schools

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommended that the Board of Education waive first review and approve the list of school divisions recommended to receive the designation of School Division of Innovation.

Dr. Durán made a motion to waive first review and approve the list of school divisions to receive the SDI designation. The motion was seconded by Dr. Wilson and carried by Board roll call vote.

Board Roll Call:

- Mr. Daniel Gecker – aye
- Ms. Pamela Davis-Vaught - aye
- Dr. Francisco Durán - aye
- Ms. Anne Holton – aye
- Dr. Tammy Mann - aye
- Dr. Keisha Pexton – aye
- Dr. Jamelle Wilson – aye

PRESENTATIONS

K. State Special Education Advisory Committee (SSEAC) Annual Report

Dr. Samantha Hollins, assistant superintendent, special education and student services, introduced Christine Germeyer, chair, State Special Education Advisory Committee and Jill Sowers, vice chair, State Special Education Advisory Committee to the Board.

Ms. Germeyer and Ms. Sowers presented the Stated Special Education Advisory Committee (SSEAC) Annual Report (July 2019 – June 2020) to the Board. A copy of this presentation can be found at <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/2020/09-sep/agenda-091720.shtml>.

The purpose of the SSEAC is to promote the education of children with disabilities by providing advice and policy guidance based on input from citizens and constituent groups. The SSEAC is organized and functions in accordance with state and federal requirements. The federal regulations specify membership and require that a majority of members be individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities and represents various stakeholder groups as prescribed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

This year, the SSEAC held four meetings. A public comment period was held at each meeting. The SSEAC members appreciated the time and effort of Virginia citizens to attend or provide a written narrative of their commentary for presentation at meetings to ensure their voices are heard. The following topics were heard:

- Eligibility process
- Discipline/expulsion/suspension over representation of low-income students, African American students, students with disabilities, and immigrant children
- Foster care over representation of students with disabilities

Each member of the SSEAC was provided an opportunity at the SSEAC meetings to report on activities and issues from their constituency groups. The following concerns were shared through each SSEAC member's constituency report and are grouped by topic area as indicated:

- Teacher shortages, concerns, retention, pay, burnout, recruitment, support
- Early student training on post-secondary options and considerations
- Parent and community involvement
- Critical decision points
- Least restrictive environment (LRE) - Inclusion
- Transition
- Children's Services Act (CSA) funding and regional training centers
- Discipline, restraint/seclusion

The committee identifies specific topics throughout the year for general presentations. The topics presented were based on the following topics:

- Students with Disabilities Discipline Data Review
- New Virginia Community School Framework (VCSF) Initiative

- Transition University and Inclusion Project Updates
- Joint Legislative Audit Review Commission Audit Briefing
- SSIP, VAAP, and Private School Monitoring Outcomes Updates
- Military Service Requirements
- Pre-Employment Transition Services
- Education and Stability for Kids in Foster Care/Homelessness

Ms. Germeyer shared that during the pandemic, VDOE worked tirelessly to produce and provide a variety of resources and information through its website, regularly maintained communications with local schools divisions, advocated for waivers at the federal level, and continually updated a COVID-19 FAQ's page to keep families informed. VDOE invested in initiatives to develop online resources that promoted total inclusive school programming. The efforts of the VDOE and the Board have not gone unnoticed by the SSEAC.

SSEAC thanked and recognized Dr. Hollins and her team for keeping children with disabilities a priority during the closure. Additionally, the SSEAC commended the Board and the Department on the following accomplishments of this past administrative year:

- Multiple workgroups and task forces who addressed safety, learning, and the return to school for children across the Commonwealth.
- Implementing the option to sign-up for information updates from the GovDelivery system where Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) shared instructional resources, professional development support, and information for families directly with stakeholders.
- Purchasing Virtual Job Shadowing licenses for school systems to use at no cost for students with disabilities.
- PEATC Transition University platform which is designed to educate families, teachers, and self-advocates available opportunities and resources for students transitioning to a post-secondary life.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic closing schools, the SSEAC had identified the continuing need to improve opportunities for students with disabilities to be educated alongside their peers without disabilities, in the least restrictive environment. The SSEAC had looked more closely at discipline data among students with disabilities, and more notable the disproportionate discipline towards students of color with disabilities. The SSEAC identified the need to support the whole child by providing social-emotional learning and improving family engagement. Funding for Virginia's public education should be adequate to ensure that every student in the Commonwealth has an equal opportunity to become a high-performing, "life-ready" citizen.

The worldwide pandemic exacerbated existing inequities within the Commonwealth. Students with disabilities, English language learners, low-income families and limited internet access households are among the most marginalized populations. Learning was significantly altered due to the school closures and highlighted challenges for students with disabilities and their parents,

families and caregivers engaging in and for school divisions providing virtual education and supports. As school divisions begin to prepare for the new school year, there is still much that needs considered when addressing the needs of all students.

Students with disabilities must continue to remain a priority as schools return to learning. Based on the above observations, public comments, reports from members representing their constituency groups, and other information presented to the committee, the SSEAC made the following recommendations to the Board:

- Continue efforts to address the teacher, staff, and other professional support shortages by:
- Exploring available funding resources and partnerships.
- Reviewing teacher licensure and application process, i.e., cost, review time, and PRAXIS requirements.
- Investigating the release of grant awards prior to the fall semester for students enrolled in teacher preparation college courses.
- Pursuing innovative partnerships (with institutes of higher education and local school divisions) and support of early career professionals to attain licensure, support retention and provide high quality professional development and technical assistance. These endeavors will facilitate the expansion of programs like The Journey Into Teaching Academy (JITA), which currently focuses on newer teachers maintaining their license and staying in place.
- Provide local school divisions with additional resources and supports needed to further promote social-emotional learning (SEL) and enhance connections for students and families created through existing initiatives. Such as SEL standards development, grants and partnerships between community mental health providers and local school divisions to build school-based mental health programs, Virginia Tiered Systems of Support (VTSS), and promoting behavioral health design. These services need to be developed with a focus on ensuring that students and families can access them in-person or through virtual learning alternatives.
- Continue initiatives by supporting the development of online resources that promote total inclusive school programming and more in-depth trainings for school personnel that cover:
 - Special education regulations, to include transition, targeted specifically for school building administrators.
 - Transition beginning in elementary through post-secondary choices.
 - Advanced online modules for dyslexia that go into more detail than the current module required for teacher licensure.
 - Critical Decision Points modules in other languages.
- Support efforts of higher education by encouraging partnerships and expanding programs that make permanent the focus on universal design that has been required in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Germeyer and Ms. Sowers thanked the Board for the opportunity to share and present recommendations. It is the hope of SSEAC that the Board and Department will continue to keep students with disabilities a priority by considering and implementing the recommendations, as deemed appropriate, without a delay.

The Superintendent recommended that the Board receive the SSEAC report and its recommendations.

The Board accepted this report.

WRITTEN REPORTS

L. Written Report on Drive 2025, the Virginia Department of Education's Strategic Plan

Dr. John Hendron, coordinator of advancement and organizational development, provided the Board with a written report on Drive 2025, The Virginia Department of Education's Strategic Plan. The report can be viewed <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/2020/09-sep/item-l.docx>

M. Update on Early Childhood Education in Virginia

Ms. Jenna Conway, chief school readiness officer, provided the Board with a written update on early childhood education in Virginia. The report can be viewed <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/2020/09-sep/item-m-attachment-a.pdf>

DISCUSSION ON CURRENT ISSUES- by Board of Education Members and Superintendent of Public Instruction

Dr. Lane shared a brief overview of the State Snapshot of the reopening of Virginia's schools. The heat map, which illustrates the operational status of each division as of September 8, 2020, can be viewed at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/health_medical/office/reopen-status.shtml

To date, 50 percent of school divisions are fully remote. The remainder of the school divisions are hybrid or in-person.

Dr. Lane shared that he has been in regular contact with local school divisions both virtually and in person. Some of school divisions have experienced technical issues.

Ms. Holton thanked Dr. Lane for his presentation. She stated that she is interested to learn more about what the department is doing to help school division return safely to in-person instruction and how can divisions learn from each other. Dr. Lane stated that guidance continues to be provided to local school divisions to help them implement strategies to return in-person. The Virginia Department of Health has created metrics for student returning to in—person learning and resources to help communities better understand and determine transmission rates. He also

explained that school divisions are encouraged to create plans to move from remote to hybrid to in-person learning.

Dr. Mann asked if there are ways to offer guidance on the amount of screen time that is appropriate for children as it is likely overwhelming for younger children. Dr. Lane shared that the department has developed resources and guidance on the appropriate amount of screen time and synchronous and asynchronous learning. The Virtual Teaching and Learning Hub resources can be found online at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/virtual_learning/index.shtml.

Dr. Pexton asked if the department was providing any support or guidance to parents who are helping their children with virtual learning. Dr. Lane shared that there are several resources available to parent including information on the Virtual Teaching and Learning Hub for parents as well as COVID-19 resources for parents at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/health_medical/office/covid-19-resources-families.shtml.

Mr. Gecker asked what are the department's expectations with regard to outcomes for this year. The school closures and virtual learning have last longer than anyone anticipated back in March. The Board, nor the Department should wait until the end of the year to assess these questions and expectations and have a better idea how students and local divisions are learning and performing. Dr. Lane shared that he would provide the Board with a copy of the superintendent's memo that was sent to divisions on how they could qualify for a clock hours waiver. Further, divisions will be required to submit periodic reports to the Board and will work with the President and Vice President to develop those survey/reporting questions.

Dr. Durán recognized Hispanic Heritage Month, September 16 – October 15, 2020.

Mr. Gecker expressed some sadness that the Board cannot meet in-person. Additionally, he thanked Dr. Lane and the staff for their hard work and recognized the stress that the current environment has created for everyone.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business of the Board of Education, Mr. Gecker adjourned the business meeting call at 1:49 p.m.



Mr. Daniel Gecker, President