

Virginia Board of Education – July 2021 Meeting Update

On July 21st & 22nd, 2021, the [Virginia Board of Education](#) (Board) met for their regularly scheduled July work session and business meeting. The meetings were live streamed for viewers, and recordings of those meetings can be found [here](#). While we do our best to give you a concise summary of the topics discussed during each meeting, we encourage you and your superintendent to delve deep into this information to better understand how it will impact your school division. Additionally, we welcome any feedback that you may wish to provide. If you have any questions, concerns, or compliments for the Board, please send them to me at jason@vsba.org.

Wednesday July 21, 2021- Committee on the Standards of Quality

On Wednesday July 21, 2021, the Board convened for a meeting of the [Committee on the Standards of Quality\(SOQ\)](#). Board President Dan Gecker called the meeting to order and asked Dr. Leslie Sale, Director of Policy, Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) to provide members with an [overview of past SOQ prescriptions and possible future proposals](#) for the Board to consider. Following the presentation, the Board discussed the process for the 2021 SOQ prescription. President Gecker stated the Board will have a deeper discussion at its September meeting regarding the 2021 SOQ prescriptions.

Following discussion, the meeting of the Committee on the Standards of Quality was adjourned.

Wednesday July 21, 2021- Special Committee to Review the Standards of Accreditation

The [Special Committee to Review the Standards of Accreditation](#) met on Wednesday, July 21, 2021. Dr. Leslie Sale, Director of Policy, VDOE, provided an overview of the work the special committee had done in the last year. Dr. Sale presented the special committee with [possible amendments to the Standards of Accreditation \(SOA\)](#) based on feedback from stakeholder groups solicited at various meetings. Dr. Sale explained the process the special committee will use as they [finalize the proposed amendments](#) to the SOA for consideration by the full Board.

Following the presentation by Dr. Sale, special committee members discussed the next steps for their work. The special committee will meet to finalize their recommendations at the September Board work session. With no further discussion, the Special Committee meeting was adjourned.

Thursday July 22, 2021- Business Meeting

On [Thursday July 22, 2021](#), the Board reconvened for their [regularly scheduled business session](#). Board President Dan Gecker called the July meeting to order. The first order of business was the election of the Board President and Vice President for a term of two years. Board member, Dan Gecker, was elected President and Board member, Dr. Jamal Wilson, was elected Vice President.

Following the election of President and Vice President, President Gecker informed the Board that [Item H](#) on the agenda will be moved to the September meeting. President Gecker then asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the June meeting of the Board. A motion was made and properly seconded to approve the minutes of the June Board meeting. The June Board meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

With approval of the June meeting minutes, the Board proceeded to allow public comment.

At the conclusion of public comment, the Board accepted the following Consent Agenda items:

[Item A](#)- Final Review to Certify a List of Qualified Persons for the Office of Division Superintendents of Schools ([Item A- Attachment A](#)), [Item B](#)- Final Review of Financial Report on Literary Fund and Updates to the First Priority Waiting List ([Item B- Attachment A](#)), [Item C](#)- Final Review of Proposed Changes to Certain Accreditation Indicators in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Legislative Action in the 2021 General Assembly, [Item D](#)- Final Review of Fast-Track Regulatory Action to Amend the Licensure Regulations for School Personnel and Regulations Governing the Review and Approval of Education Programs in Virginia (8VAC20-23 and 8VAC20-543) to Comport with Legislation from the 2021 Session of the General Assembly ([Item D- Attachment A](#)) ([Item D- Attachment B](#)).

Having accepted the above referenced items on the Consent Agenda, the Board proceeded to its items for Action and Discussion.

[Item E](#)- Final Review for Consent to the Establishment of a Joint-operated School – Region VII Virtual Academy ([Item E- Attachment A](#)) ([Item E- Attachment B](#)). Mr. Michael Bolling, Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Innovation, VDOE, presented Item E for Final Review by the Board. Mr. Bolling stated this item is the formal request for consent to establish a joint-operated school in Virginia, as required by § [22.1-26](#) of the *Code of Virginia*. Section [22.1-26](#) requires the Virginia Board of Education’s consent when two or more school boards wish to establish a joint or regional school or program. Since first review, four additional school divisions in Superintendent’s Region VII have joined the original thirteen school division partners to create the Region VII Virtual Academy. The Region VII Virtual Academy is being established to alleviate the participating school division demands of providing both remote and in-person learning opportunities.

The Region VII Virtual Academy aims to improve student access, outcomes and achievement by providing students an opportunity to learn in a remote space. This high-quality virtual environment assists in providing equity of access to diverse content that may not be available through in-person school, offers instruction differentiated on a per student basis, and increases participation and interaction with Virginia-approved curriculum.

Mr. Bolling informed the Board that it is the recommendation of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to accept Item E for Final Review. A motion was made and properly seconded to approve the item for Final Review. The motion carried unanimously with Board member Pamela Davis-Vought recusing herself because her school division (Bristol City) is involved in the academy.

Item F- Final Review of Revisions to Model Guidance for Positive and Preventative Code of Student Conduct Policy and Alternatives to Suspension. Dr. Samantha Hollins, Assistant Superintendent, Department of Special Education and Student Services, VDOE, provided an overview of Item F for the Board. In 2020 and 2021, the Virginia General Assembly passed several pieces of legislation that necessitate revisions to *Model Guidance for Positive and Preventative Code of Student Conduct policy and Alternatives to Suspension* to align with the *Code of Virginia*. A stakeholder group comprised of school and school division leaders, students, parents, and advocacy groups was convened to create and revise the *Standards for Dress and Grooming* and the *Standards for Reducing Bias in the Enforcement of Student Code of Conduct Policy* as part of the *Model Guidance*. The Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports Research and Implementation Center (VTSS-RIC), the Virginia School Board Association, and the Virginia Student Support and Conduct Committee also, suggested revisions to organization and language, as did the Office of Data Services and the Office of Equity and Communications within the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE).

The proposed revisions to the *Model Guidance for Positive and Preventative Code of Student Conduct Policy and Alternatives to Suspension* support the priorities and goals of the Board of Education of “*providing high quality, effective learning environments for all students,*” as outlined in Priority 1 of the [Board of Education Comprehensive Plan](#).

The *Model Guidance for Positive and Preventative Code of Student Conduct Policy and Alternatives to Suspension* was presented to the Board at the June 17, 2021, meeting. The Board decided to keep the item under first review due to the number of changes including added language on page 11. No action was requested so the edit on page 11 remains.

Dr. Hollins stated it is the recommendation of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to accept Item F for Final Review. Board member Anne Holton asked the Board to consider a minor edit to language in the report. A motion was made and properly seconded to accept Item F as amended for Final Review. The Item was approved for Final Review as amended.

Item G- Final Review of Revised Regulation for Licensed Child Day Centers Transferring from the Board of Social Services to the Board of Education. Ms. Jenna Conway, Deputy Superintendent for Early Childhood Education, VDOE, presented Item G for Final Review by the Board. Effective July 1, 2021, the Board of Education became responsible for establishing a unified public-private system for early childhood care and education (ECCE) in the Commonwealth, to be

implemented by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). Chapters [860](#) and [861](#) of the 2020 Acts of the General Assembly require regulations governing the implementation and oversight of ECCE programs to be transferred from the Board of Social Services to the Board of Education. The Board's initial actions to adopt these regulations with "necessary amendments" are exempt from Article 2 (¶ 2.2-4006 et seq.) of Chapter 40 of Title 2.2 of the *Code of Virginia*.

The Board unanimously approved the transfer of existing regulations to the State Board of Education administrative code in April 2021, which became effective July 1, 2021. Since that time, VDSS finalized amendments to the Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers (22 VAC 40 - 185 under Social Services; now 8 VAC 20 - 780 under Education) to comply with federal health and safety requirements. This amended regulation, with necessary amendments, must now be adopted by the Board per Chapters [860](#) and [861](#) of the 2020 Acts of the General Assembly.

The process of revising the *Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers* began in 2016, prompted by the reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act and corresponding Final Rule in the Federal Register. The Act and Rule clarified the minimum health and safety standards that states should set to promote access to safe, quality child care. Since the initial notice of intended regulatory action, VDSS has conducted a series of public comment periods and incorporated feedback as appropriate while still meeting the goal of complying with federally recommended standards. As such, the revised standards have been thoroughly vetted and reviewed. The Board would adopt the standard as revised, with necessary amendments including:

- Renumbering;
- Changing references from the Board of Social Services to the Board of Education; and
- Changing code references and descriptions.

This item supports Priority 1 of the Board's Comprehensive Plan to provide high-quality learning environments for all students.

Ms. Conway informed the Board that it is the recommendation of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to approve Item G for Final Review. A motion was made and properly seconded to approve the item for Final Review. The motion carried unanimously.

[Item H](#)- First Review of the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure Recommendations for Guidelines for Mentor Teacher Programs for Beginning and Experienced Teachers ([Item H- Attachment A](#)). Successful mentor programs are characterized by strong leadership and management, a commitment to teacher induction and improving student achievement in all schools, and adequate resources to deliver the planned program. [Section 22.1-305.1](#) of the *Code of Virginia* requires the Board of Education to issue guidelines for mentor teacher programs. *The Guidelines for Mentor Teacher Programs for Beginning and Experienced Teachers* provide the framework for effective mentor programs that assist teachers as they become experienced and dedicated professionals.

The *Guidelines for Mentor Teacher Programs for Beginning and Experienced Teachers* were first developed in response to the Education Accountability and Quality Enhancement Act of 1999, and were approved by the Board on June 22, 2000. The guidelines have not been revised since the original publication in 2000.

In 2004, funding from the Teacher Quality Enhancement (TQE) State Grant was used to convene a Task Force on Teacher Mentor Programs in Hard-to-Staff Schools. The New Teacher Center, then housed at the University of California Santa Cruz, served as a consultant on the Task Force's work to develop [Virginia Requirements of Quality and Effectiveness for Beginning Teacher Mentor Programs in Hard-to-Staff Schools](#). While not a revision to the 2000 *Guidelines for Mentor Teacher Programs for Beginning and Experienced Teachers*, this document served as a supplement to assist divisions with mentor programs in hard-to-staff schools.

Since the mid-1990s, the Virginia General Assembly has funded various strategies that support beginning teachers and mentors. On October 17, 2019, the Board prescribed new Standards of Quality (SOQ) for the Commonwealth's public schools which included a commitment to support educator recruitment and retention with an increased emphasis on mentoring new teachers and principals.

In October 2020, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) delivered a report, [Operations and Performance of the Virginia Department of Education](#), in which it recommended that the Board update its guidance on how to implement effective teacher mentorship programs. As a result of this guidance, the Department of Teacher Education and Licensure, in collaboration with Dr. Linda Wallinger, began the process for revisions to the *Guidelines for Mentor Teacher Programs for Beginning and Experienced Teachers*.

Dr. Wallinger merged the principles and guidelines from both the 2000 *Guidelines for Mentor Teacher Programs for Beginning and Experienced Teachers* and the 2004 *Virginia Requirements of Quality and Effectiveness for Beginning Teacher Mentor Programs in Hard-to-Staff Schools* and incorporated the *Teacher Induction Program Standards* and *Mentor Practice Standards* from the non-profit organization, the [New Teacher Center](#). In addition, Dr. Wallinger surveyed other states' current practices for providing guidance and support to new teachers and researched current practices among divisions across Virginia.

VDOE executive leadership staff reviewed the draft document along with feedback from the Office of Equity and Community Engagement. Once the internal review was completed, the draft was reviewed and vetted by representatives from the Virginia Education Association (VEA) and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). The draft *Guidelines for Mentor Teacher Programs for Beginning and Experienced Teachers* was presented to the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure (ABTEL) on April 26, 2021. ABTEL recommended that

guideline 8, “Beginning Teacher Professional Learning”, include language to reflect not only working with, but *communicating* successfully with colleagues and families. This single edit was made to the guidelines.

This item was removed from the agenda and will be heard at the September 2021 meeting of the Board.

Item I- **First Review of Proposed Revisions to the Guidelines for Locally Awarded Verified Credits to Allow for the Use of Performance Assessments to Verify Credits in History/ Social Science.** Mrs. Shelley Loving-Ryder, Assistant Superintendent for Student Assessment, Accountability, and ESEA Programs, and Mr. Michael Bolling, Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Innovation, VDOE, presented Item I to the Board for First Review. The proposed revisions to the *Guidance Document Governing Certain Provisions of the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia, 8VAC20-131-110 Standard and Verified Units of Credit: Locally-Awarded Verified Credit (the SOA Guidance Document)* to allow for the use of performance assessments to verify credits in History and Social Science address language included in the 2020 and 2021 Virginia General Assembly’s Appropriations Act that adds “successful completion of assessments that include state-developed performance tasks scored locally in accordance with Board guidelines using state-developed rubrics” as an option for earning verified credit in history/social science. These amendments to the *SOA Guidance Document* provide guidance for local school divisions that exercise the option of using state-developed performance tasks, in conjunction with other local assessments, to determine if a student has earned a locally awarded verified credit (LAVC) in history and social science.

The revisions to the *SOA Guidance Document* will assist the Board of Education (Board) in meeting Priority 1 of the Virginia Board of Education Comprehensive Plan: 2018-2023, to “provide high-quality, effective learning environments for all students” and Priority 3, to “ensure successful implementation of the *Profile of a Virginia Graduate* and the accountability system for school quality as embodied in the revisions to the *Standards of Accreditation.*”

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends the Board accept the item for First Review. The Board accepted Item I for First Review.

After hearing each Action/Discussion Item, the Board welcomed Mr. Barry Duval, President and CEO, Virginia Chamber of Commerce, to present their **Blueprint Virginia 2030** program, **Item J**. At the conclusion of Mr. Duval’s presentation, the Board accepted the following written reports:

Item K- **Lifting of the Declared State of Emergency and Impact on State-level Waivers and Relief Measures** and **Item L**- **Report on African American History Education.**



With no additional items on the Board's agenda, President Gecker adjourned the July 2021 meeting of the Virginia Board of Education.

The next meeting of the Virginia Board of Education will be **September 22 and 23, 2021**.