

## Virginia Board of Education – April 2019 Meeting Update

On April 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, the [Virginia Board of Education \(VBOE\)](#) met for their annual retreat work session and regular business meeting. VSBA was present and reviewed the video streams of the meetings, which can be found [here](#). While we do our best to give you a concise summary of the relevant aspects of the 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](mailto:jason@vsba.org). You are a vital part of this conversation, and we may wish to share your feedback at the next VBOE meeting on June 20, 2019.

### **Board Retreat Work Session**

The Board convened for their annual retreat work session at Hermitage High School located in Henrico County. The full agenda for the retreat can be downloaded [here](#). The work session began with a welcome message from Henrico County School Board Chair, Mr. John Montgomery. Following the welcome message, the Board proceeded to review the agenda and President Gecker provided remarks regarding priorities and goals for revisions to the Standards of Quality (SOQ).

Virginia Department of Education (DoE) staff member, Dr. Jennifer Piver-Renna, Director of Research, delivered the first presentation of the retreat and provided the Board with research surrounding **State Examples and Follow-up Data Requests for SOQ Proposals**. The presentation provided Board members with an update on the distribution of Virginia teachers by qualifications, an overview of STEM Retention Grants impact data, case studies from states with teacher mentoring/coaching programs, and case studies from states with tiered teacher licensure and teacher leader programs. The Board has expressed an interest in finding ways to attract and retain effective teachers to the Commonwealth to ensure every classroom, especially those in the state's most challenged schools, has a qualified teacher. Additionally, the Board is seeking to adopt measures that provide teachers with opportunities to be leaders within a school building, noting that many qualified teachers leave the profession citing lack of leadership roles outside of the traditional pathway of school administration. The research and findings from this presentation can be accessed [here](#).

The presentation was followed by a **Discussion on Services for English Learner Students** presented by Dr. Jessica Costa, English Learner Instruction Specialist with DoE. This presentation provided a definition of what constitutes an English Learner (EL) and a breakdown of the concentration of EL students within local public-school divisions in the Commonwealth. This presentation also included best practice research on instructional strategies that provide EL students opportunity for growth. The research and best practices presented to the Board can be found [here](#).

The final agenda item of the morning was to hear a panel discussion with local school superintendents for the purpose of soliciting feedback on potential [SOQ recommendations](#) from the BoE. Joining the panel was Dr. Brian Austin, Superintendent, Lee County Public Schools, Dr. Melinda Boone, Superintendent, Norfolk City Public Schools, Dr. Scott Braband, Superintendent, Fairfax County Public Schools, and Dr. Kim Evans, Superintendent, Greensville County Public Schools. The Superintendents discussed opportunities and challenges facing their respective school divisions. Board members questioned the panelists on the proposed

SOQ recommendations largely focused on effective teachers in classrooms. The Superintendents agreed that focusing on teachers is important but discussed the need to include building administrator mentoring/coaching as equally important. The Superintendents also expressed the importance of local flexibility in where to move resources (human and/or financial) if additional supports are provided to local school divisions.

Following the panel discussion, the Board was provided a tour of Hermitage High School and broke for lunch provided by students from the Hermitage Advanced Education Center.

### **Thursday Business Session**

The following morning, the Board reconvened for their [main business session](#). President Gecker called the meeting to order and reflected on the previous day's retreat. The Board proceeded and unanimously approved the minutes of the March 2019 meeting.

President Gecker acknowledged the presence of special guests in attendance at the meeting and Board members offered Resolutions of Recognition to Crystal DeLong of Bedford County Public Schools, who is the recipient of the Virginia Education Association's Award for Teaching Excellence, Cammie Williams, Roanoke County Public Schools, Jennifer Carson, Virginia Beach City Public Schools, and Kathryn Wheelock, Arlington County Public Schools, all of whom received French Academic Palms, and Caroline Eschenbach, Roanoke County Public Schools, this year's Milken Family Foundation Educator Award winner. Each recognized guest was invited to address the Board.

Following recognition of guests, Board President Gecker opened the meeting for Public Comment. After accepting public comment, the Board approved the following Consent Agenda items: **Item A- Resolution of Recognition to Commemorate the Week of May 6-10, 2019, as Teacher Appreciation Week**, [Item B- Final Review of Proposed Revisions to the Regulations Governing the Collection and Reporting of Truancy \(8VAC20-730\) \(Fast-Track\)](#), and [Item C- Final Review of Quarterly Financial Report on Literacy Fund \(Excel File Attachment\)](#).

The morning's first Action/Discussion Item was to hear **Final Review of Proposal to Include a Multiple Race Student Group in State Accreditation**, [Item D](#). Virginia Department of Education guidelines indicate that any student groups comprising five percent or more of the annual student enrollment should be considered in accountability models. During the 2018-2019 school year, 5.7 percent of students enrolled identified as two or more races (Non-Hispanic). The Department is asking the Board to add the "Multiple Races" student group to state accreditation beginning in the 2020-2021 school year to include students that identify as two or more races, affecting indicators of academic achievement gaps in English and academic achievement gaps in Mathematics. Board member Duran asked for clarification on Hispanic students that identify as two or more races. Due to federal guidelines, Hispanic students will remain their own group for accountability purposes even if they identify as more two or more races. The Board approved final review of Item D.

[Item E- First Review of Corrective Action Plan Required by the Division-level Review for Greenville County Public Schools](#). During the 2016-2017 school year, Greenville County Public Schools (GCPS) division and school leaders met regularly to review the progress of GCPS. Following the division-level review, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for GCPS was developed and approved by the Virginia BoE March 22, 2018. In July 2018, a new

superintendent began with GCPS. During the summer and fall, the Office of School Quality met with GCPS leaders to review steps leading to the division-level review and to begin implementation of the MOU requirements. During December and January, the superintendent and Office of School Quality staff met to complete a draft Corrective Action plan based on areas identified in the division-level review.

GCPS Superintendent, Dr. Kim Evans, addressed the Board and provided an overview of the school division, including challenges and opportunities for growth, and shared information of the division-level review process and the Corrective Action Plan. Dr. Evans discussed the community meetings held to provide parents and stakeholders with opportunities to ask questions and provide feedback to the school division regarding the Corrective Action Plan.

Board President Gecker invited GCPS Board Chair, Mrs. Rhonda Jones-Gilliam, to address the Board. Mrs. Jones-Gilliam expressed her thanks to the Board and the excitement to make positive change in the school division for the benefit of children.

President Gecker questioned Dr. Evans regarding the school division's plan and whether they feel ready to move forward with the Corrective Action Plan. Confident in the steps GCPS is taking, President Gecker asked for a motion to waive final review and approve the Corrective Action Plan brought forward. Board approved motion to waive final review of Item E.

**Item F- First Review of Request for Approval of an Innovative Program Opening Prior to Labor Day (Year-Round Schools) for Chesterfield County Public Schools' Falling Creek Elementary School.** Mr. Zachary Robbins, Policy Director, Virginia DoE, addressed the Board regarding a request from Chesterfield County Public Schools for a waiver to permit Falling Creek Elementary School to open before Labor Day to allow an innovative program to be implemented, specifically, a year-round school.

*Code of Virginia* Section 22.1-79.1 currently requires local school divisions to set their calendars so that the first day of school is no earlier than the day after Labor Day. In 2019, the Virginia General Assembly amended this statute to permit school divisions to set their calendars so that the first day of school is no earlier than 14 days prior to Labor Day, beginning with the 2019-2020 school year. Statute permits school divisions to apply for waivers to these calendar restrictions for instruction programs offered on a year-round basis, and such waivers are applicable only to the individual school where such program is implemented. A similar request was approved by the Board in 2018 for Bellwood Elementary School in Chesterfield County.

Dr. Mervin B. Daugherty, Superintendent, Chesterfield County Public Schools, provided the Board with [background and context for opening a second year-round school](#) at Falling Creek Elementary School.

Dr. Duran made a motion to waive first reading and approve the waiver for Falling Creek Elementary School. Board approved motion to waive first reading of Item F.

**Item G- First Review of Recommendations Concerning Literacy Fund Applications Approved for Release of Funds or Placement on a Waiting List.** Mr. Kent Dickey, Deputy Superintendent of Budget, Finance, and Operations, Virginia DoE, brought the Board six Literacy Fund project applications submitted by Southampton County for placement on the Literacy Fund First Priority Waiting List. At the March 2019 Board meeting, the Board approved the projects to be placed on the Approved Application List. Mr. Dickey asked the Board to waive

first review and approve the six Literacy Fund loan applications submitted by Southampton County for placement on the First Priority Waiting List, as well as approve a revised Approved Application List reflecting the movement of these applications from that list to the First Priority Waiting List. Board approved requested action.

**Item H- First Review of Proposed Regulations Governing the Designation of School Divisions of Innovation (Final Stage).** Mr. Zach Robbins, Director of Policy, Virginia DoE, presented for review the regulations governing the designation of School Divisions of Innovation. In 2017, the Virginia General Assembly approved House Bill 1981 (Greason), directing the Board to develop regulations for the designation of School Divisions of Innovation (SDI). To qualify for the designation, a local school board must submit a plan of innovation according to Board criteria presented in the regulations. The legislation defines “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.

The regulations would establish the procedures and criteria for designation of a SDI, and provide that the Superintendent of Public Instruction establish a format and timelines for local school boards to submit plans of innovation. The regulations would prohibit any exemption to regulations that are mandated by state and federal law or are designed to promote health or safety, special education regulations, and certain provisions in the Standards of Accreditation.

The Board waived first review and approved regulations as presented.

**Item I- First Review of Proposed Amendments to the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia (8VAC20-131) under the Fast-Track provisions of the Administrative Process Act to finalize Emergency Regulations related to Locally-Awarded Verified Credits.** Comprehensive revisions to the *Regulations Establishing Standards for the Accreditation of Public Schools in Virginia*, more commonly referred to as the Standards of Accreditation or SOA, became effective for the 2018-2019 academic year. One component of these revisions changed the availability of locally-awarded verified credits, which provide students the opportunity to receive a verified credit in a course that they have passed but failed the related end-of-course Standards of Learning test twice within a narrow margin. To receive a locally-awarded verified credit, the student must take the test twice, score between 375 and 399 on one of the attempts and demonstrate achievement and mastery in the academic content through a local appeal process.

After the comprehensive revisions to the SOA were approved through the Administrative Process Act, it became apparent that the revisions would have established inequitable opportunities to earn locally-awarded verified credits for students that will be attending high school at the same time. The revised regulations would have provided that students that entered the ninth grade prior to the 2018-2019 school year that struggled to pass either the English or mathematics end-of-course test could not earn locally-awarded verified credits in English or mathematics, while students entering the ninth grade beginning in the 2018-2019 school year would have access to locally-awarded verified credits in those subjects.

To provide parity among these high school cohorts, and to help current students earn their diplomas for graduation in the spring of 2018, the Board adopted emergency regulations to extend the availability of a locally-awarded verified credit to English and mathematics for

students who entered the ninth grade prior to the 2018-2019 school year. In addition, the Board's guidance document governing the award of locally-awarded verified credit was updated to extend the use of locally-awarded verified credits in English and mathematics for these students.

Under the Administrative Process Act, the emergency regulations that were approved by the Board became effective on May 9, 2019 and will expire on November 8, 2019. To ensure that the Board's regulations continue to permit all students to access locally-awarded verified credits in English and mathematics, permanent regulations are proposed to replace the emergency regulations, using the fast-track provisions of the Administrative Process Act. Since the emergency regulations became effective, no public comments have been received.

The amendments align with Priority 1 in the Board's Comprehensive Plan, to provide high-quality, effective learning environments for all students by advancing policies that expand equitable opportunities.

Board member Holton asked if first review could be waived. Motion was made to waive first review. Board waived first review of Item I.

**Item J- Initial Review of the Proposed 2018 Science Standards of Learning Curriculum Framework.** Dr. Anne Petersen, Science Coordinator, Office of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, at Virginia DoE, addressed the Board on the curriculum framework for the Commonwealth's Standards of Learning in Science. [The 2018 Science Curriculum Frameworks](#) were developed to support teachers and administrators in the instruction of the *Science Standards of Learning*. School divisions are encouraged to incorporate the Curriculum Framework into a broader, locally-designed curriculum. The Curriculum Framework provides the minimum content that all teachers should teach, and all students should learn.

The initial curriculum framework adopted in 2018 reflected changes based on feedback from K-12 science educators. These changes provide educators support in the instruction of science through integrating Science and Engineering Practices into content, ensuring the vertical alignment of science concepts for each Standard.

Following the Board of Education's acceptance of the Proposed 2018 *Science Standards of Learning Curriculum Framework* for first review, the Department of Education will receive public comment for at least 30 days before bringing the Proposed Revised 2018 *Science Standards of Learning Curriculum Framework* to the Board of Education for final review in June 2019. During the public comment period, feedback will be solicited from stakeholders through an online comment platform and through webinars hosted by the Department of Education. This feedback will inform changes to be made to the document prior to submitting the Curriculum Framework to the Board of Education.

Board member Holton inquired about outreach to stakeholder groups regarding the curriculum framework. Dr. Petersen informed the Board of the outreach to industry and stakeholder organizations to ensure the curriculum matches what is currently being addressed in the science community.

Board accepted Item J for first review.

**Item K- First Review of Recommended Cut Scores for Substitute Tests for Verified Credit in Mathematics.** Mrs. Shelly Loving-Ryder, Assistant Superintendent for Student Assessment and ESEA Programs, spoke to the Board regarding substitute tests used to award verified credit for students in mathematics. These tests are included in the accreditation calculations for schools. At the time of adoption, these substitute tests were judged to measure content that incorporated or exceeded the Standards of Learning in effect.

In 2018-2019, new SOL tests measuring the 2016 mathematics content standards will be administered. These new SOL tests measuring 2016 mathematics have been implemented and the current substitute tests must be reviewed to ensure they still incorporate or exceed the content of the current SOL and that appropriate cut scores for proficient and advanced be adopted.

A committee of educators reviewed the tests and evaluated previously adopted cut scores. In some instances, the committee members verified the current cut scores. In other areas, the committee recommended revisions to cut scores.

Board member Paxton questioned the conclusion of the educator committee seeking to understand the criteria used to develop the recommended cut scores. Mrs. Loving-Ryder explained the educators cut score recommendations based on the curriculum they are teaching daily.

Board member Holton asked if any public comment had been received regarding the proposed cut scores. Dr. Lane responded these cut scores are generally non-controversial and that no public comment has been received by the DoE.

Motion made to waive first hearing. Board waived first hearing of Item K.

**Item L- First Review of Revisions to the List of 2019-2020 Board of Education Approved Industry Certifications, Occupational Competency Assessments, and Professional Licenses.** Mr. George R. Wilcox, Director, Operations and Accountability, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, Virginia DoE, provided the Board with a review of the process for validating industry credentials for the purpose of awarding verified credit. Important to this process is ensuring the credential is relevant and recognized in the workplace.

The Board is asked to waive first review and approve 27 new industry certification examinations, occupational competency assessments, and professional licenses to meet the Board's requirements. Additionally, the Board is asked to remove six credentials which are no longer offered by providers.

The Board waived first review and approved Item L.

**Item M- Report on Changing Timeline and Expanding Review of the *Health Education Standards of Learning* from Grades Nine and Ten, as required by House Bill 1604 and Senate Bill 953 (2018), to Reviewing all *Health Education Standards of Learning* in response 2019 Virginia General Assembly legislation ([written report](#)).**

At the conclusion of business, President Gecker asked Board members if there was any discussion of current topics. Board member Wilson asked for public input and feedback on the SoQ reforms that the Board is undertaking. She expressed the importance for the public to be aware of the work underway.

Board member Duran provided a history of Teacher Appreciation Week and encouraged members to rare “red for ed” on National Teacher Day, Tuesday May 7, 2019.

Board member Holton shared her visit to the Hampton City Schools academies program and her enthusiasm for the work underway within the local division.

Following these remarks, President Gecker adjourned the meeting.

I thank you for your support as advocates for public education. The full agenda and supporting documents can be found by visiting the following [link](#). If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards,

J.T.