

MINUTES
Virginia Board of Education
Committee on School and Division Accountability
June 25, 2014
2:00 P.M.
Jefferson Conference Room, James Monroe Building

Welcome and Opening Comments

The following Board of Education (Board) members were present for the June 25, 2014 Committee on School and Division Accountability meeting: Diane Atkinson; Christian Braunlich; Dr. Billy Cannaday, Jr.; James Dillard; Darla Edwards; Andrew Ko; and Joan Wodiska. Dr. Steven Staples, the superintendent of public instruction, was also present.

Mrs. Atkinson, chairman of the committee, convened the meeting and welcomed the Board members and guests.

Approval of Minutes from the May 21, 2014 Meeting

A motion was made to approve the minutes for the May 21, 2014 committee meeting, the motion was seconded, and the minutes were approved by the committee members.

Public Comment

Mrs. Atkinson opened the floor for public comment.

Delores Dunn spoke on behalf of the Virginia Association of Science Teachers (VAST) and presented recommended guidelines for elementary science alternative assessments for the Board's consideration. She said the organization encouraged professional development in the development and administration of the assessments and in the revision of the assessment strategies. She also indicated that they would like to see teachers involved in the development of the alternate assessments.

Mrs. Atkinson then asked if there was anyone else who wished to provide public comment. Because there were no other speakers, she moved on the next agenda item.

Presentation from the Virginia Association of Teachers of English

On behalf of the Virginia Association of Teachers of English (VATE), Sarah Crain, president of that organization, presented a report which included a list of recommendations regarding the development of guidelines for local assessments. She mentioned the following points:

- "Authentic performance assessments" are assessments that are representative of how a skill, in this case, writing, may be applied in the real world.
- For writing, "authentic performance assessments" require the student to generate original work using the writing process.

- To ensure objective scoring, measures should be in place so that portfolios will be scored by someone other than the teacher of record.
- Proficiency in writing cannot adequately be assessed in a multiple choice format, even if that format includes technology enhanced items.
- Students could have multiple opportunities throughout the year to practice this skill with different prompts.
- Professional development must be provided to teachers and collaboration is necessary.
- Small school divisions can be provided support through regional training which VATE is willing to assist in planning and providing, training for Virginia English Language Arts Supervisors (VELAS), collection of documents and paper-based resources available as links on the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) website, and instructional videos available on that website.

Discussion with Board members followed. Issues raised included the following:

- How will school divisions share information?
- Has the organization discussed these issues with elementary school teachers?
- Is there a need for spot checking?
- Lack of funding is a concern.
- Professional development and collaboration are necessary.
- How will the assessments be scored?
- Can information be provided regarding the teacher time involved; that is, the amount of time this will take whether on the teacher's own time or on the school division's time; labor, and costs required to ensure that teachers will be able to meet these standards and do these reviews?
- What outreach has the organization done with universities to ensure that new teachers will meet the expectations in this area?
- How can interactive videos assist teachers with training?

Board members thanked the group for its presentation.

Presentation from the Virginia Council for the Social Studies

This presentation was provided by a panel: Laura Lay, president of the Virginia Council for the Social Studies (VCSS) and Laura Marshall and Craig Blackman (former VCSS president), members of the organization and Virginia public school teachers.

Ms. Lay stated that this presentation was very much aligned with the group who presented at the June committee meeting.

Ms. Lay stated authentic assessment:

- Enhances critical thinking.
- Allows for historical thinking.
- Encourages creativity and individuality.
- Provides experiential learning.
- Promotes analytical skills and life-long learning traits.

Ms. Lay provided examples of authentic assessment she has used. In addition, the panel provided useful resources such as websites for the Library of Congress, the Virginia Historical Society, and National History Day. The group indicated that VCSS supports the efforts of the Consortium (VCSSSCE) and advocates regional planning. VCSS also advocates using teachers and specialists to design and evaluate authentic assessments. Because smaller counties might not have the resources, a state-wide databank was suggested. VCSS also advocates providing children opportunities for growth and improvement by using meaningful and measurable assessments.

A Board member asked that they come back with specific information regarding assessments as the Board needs assistance in this area. He is looking for methods that would be used. Ms. Lay said this will be discussed with the Consortium, and they will bring additional information to the Board, including samples. A Board member pointed out that the challenge is to determine ways to provide guidance for division-wide assessments. Ms. Lay pointed out that it is necessary to have regional planning groups and that way accountability can be assured. Cross content assessment was discussed and funding and cost also were raised as a concern. One Board member mentioned that he took from the presentation the need for exciting ways to engage students, peer sharing, and peer observing. Another Board member mentioned that she had heard great ideas, but still struggled with how to assess children locally in these subject areas; that is, how does the Board provide guidance to localities in how to do this effectively and consistently. Mr. Blackman pointed out the importance of teacher observation and sharing as part of this process.

Board members thanked the group for its presentation. This organization will continue to work with the Consortium and provide the Board with additional information at a future time.

Current and Proposed Licensure and Approved Program Regulations Addressing “Assessment of and For Learning”

Patty Pitts, assistant superintendent for teacher education and licensure, made this presentation.

Ms. Pitts discussed the Board of Education *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* and the *Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers*. The *Code of Virginia* requires that school board procedures for evaluating instructional personnel address student academic progress. The guidelines include seven performance standards. Standard four specifically addresses assessment of and for student learning. The *Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers* is a guidance document that is a companion document to the evaluation guidelines because they provide a vision for the profession and they define what teachers should know and be able to do. The approved program regulations set forth competencies that colleges and universities have to incorporate within their programs. Each institution may package its program differently, but those competencies must be addressed. The licensure regulations speak to semester hours. Historically, colleges and universities have tried to model off the licensure requirements.

At this time both sets of proposed regulations are in executive review and have not been released for public comment.

Discussion with Board members followed. Issues raised included the following:

- Development of appropriate guidance.
- Development of a timeline.
- Alignment of teacher preparation programs.
- Strategies for implementing professional development to build capacity at the local level.

Board members thanked Ms. Pitts for her presentation.

Discussion of Local Assessment Guidelines in Response to HB 930 and SB 306

There was no further discussion of this agenda item. The meeting was adjourned at 4:22.