

- C. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the Board may provide for the issuance of a provisional license, valid for a period not to exceed three years, to any person who does not meet the requirements of this section or any other requirement for licensure imposed by law.

On March 23, 2005, the Virginia Board of Education approved the establishment of a *Special Committee of the Board of Education to Study and Make Recommendations Relative to Teacher Licensure Assessments*. The committee was charged with the responsibility of examining the use of teacher licensure assessments in Virginia and other states and make recommendations to the Board of Education. The committee's work included, but was not limited to, an examination of appropriate sections of the *Code* including regulations governing licensure of teachers; the federal requirements regarding teacher quality; the use of teacher licensure assessments in other states; and options for using various teacher licensure assessments in the preparation and licensing of teachers.

The *Special Committee of the Board of Education to Study and Make Recommendations Relative to Teacher Licensure Assessments* was established and included representation from the Board of Education, Virginia General Assembly, Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure, the Virginia Congress of Parents and Teachers, the Virginia Education Association, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, institutions of higher education with approved teacher education programs, school division superintendents, school principals, and school division human resources directors.

The committee held four meetings on the following dates: March 31, 2005, April 13, 2005, April 22, 2005, and May 10, 2005. During the meetings, the committee received presentations on national and state perspectives on teacher education and licensure assessments and engaged in discussions with presenters. The presenters from other states included Jane P. Norwood, Vice-Chair, North Carolina Board of Education; Dr. Carol Gilbert, Executive Director for Educator Preparation and Quality, Massachusetts Department of Education; Dr. Marilyn Troyer, Associate Superintendent for the Teaching Profession, Ohio Department of Education; and Dr. Louise A. Tanney, Coordinator of Teacher and Principal Assessment, Division of Certification and Accreditation, Maryland State Department of Education. In addition, the following individuals presented national perspectives on assessments: Dr. Charles Coble, Vice-President, Policy Studies and Programs, Education Commission of the States, Denver, Colorado; Kate Walsh, President of the National Council on Teacher Quality, Washington, DC; Dr. Jane Hannaway, Education Policy Urban Institute for Economic and Social Policy Research, Washington, DC; and Dr. Randy Thompson, Vice-President of the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE), Washington, D.C. Opportunities for public comment also were provided during two of the four committee meetings.

During the May 10, 2005, meeting the committee unanimously approved the following recommendation and implementation requirements to be submitted to the Board of Education for review and action:

The *Special Committee of the Board of Education to Study and Make Recommendations Relative to Teacher Licensure Assessments* recommended that the Board of Education prescribe the following professional teacher's examinations for initial licensure in Virginia: (1) Literacy and Communication Skills Assessment; (2) Praxis II (content assessment); and (3) if applicable, the Virginia Reading Assessment.

On June 22, 2005, the Board of Education approved the recommendation of *The Special Committee of the Board of Education to Study and Make Recommendations Relative to Teacher Licensure Assessments*. An award was granted to National Evaluation Systems, Inc., to develop the Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment. The VCLA is composed of two areas—reading and writing. Each area is assessed by a separate subtest—a reading subtest and a writing subtest. The reading subtest contains multiple-choice items. The writing subtest contains multiple-choice items and two writing assignments—a written summary and a written composition. Areas tested include the comprehension and analysis of readings; development of ideas in essay form on specific topics; outlining and summarizing; interpretation of tables and graphs; and mastery of vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. The first test administration was held statewide on January 7, 2006.

Summary of Major Elements:

A Validation and Standard-Setting Study was conducted on January 20, 2006. The study, facilitated by staff from the National Evaluation Systems, Inc., was composed primarily of teachers as well as central office school division and higher education representation.

On February 6, 2006, the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure, received a presentation on the Validation and Standard-Setting Studies from Dr. John Mattar, Senior Area Director, Assessment Service Department, National Evaluation Systems, Inc. The advisory board passed a motion recommending the following cut scores for the VCLA. An individual may meet the requirement by meeting the individual scaled scores on the reading and writing subtests or meeting the composite score.

Reading: 235 scaled score

Writing: 235 scaled score

Composite: 470 scaled score

The members of the advisory board further recommended that the cut scores be re-examined based on data from test takers in two years.

The advisory board made the recommendation based on several factors, including that the VCLA is a new test, and the test data from the January 7 administration may not be representative of the population who will be required to take the test. In addition, colleges and universities may need to adjust their curricula to focus on the objectives of the test.

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Acting Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education receive for first review the recommendation of the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure to establish cut scores for the Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment (VCLA).

Impact on Resources: Test takers will pay the testing fees.

Timetable for Further Review/Action: Final review of the recommendation of the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure to establish cut scores for the Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment (VCLA) will be presented to the Board of Education on March 22, 2006.