

**Meeting of the State Superintendent's Leadership Advisory Council
Friday, January 5, 2001**

Present: Superintendents' Group – Stewart D. Roberson, Timothy R. Jenney, Harry Ward, Edgar B. Hatrick, III, John H. Kidd, Ira R. Trollinger, Robert C. McCracken, Margaret Blackmon, Walter A. McFarlane, Oliver A. McBride, Steven R. Staples, Edward L. Kelly, Alfred R. Butler and Andy Stamp, VASS.

Department of Education: Jo Lynne DeMary, Kenneth Magill, Cameron Harris, Charles Finley, Dan Timberlake, Anne Wescott, and Harry Smith.

The meeting opened with a discussion of proposed revisions to the Standards of Learning for history and social science. Dr. DeMary noted that public hearings will be held on Monday, January 8, for the Board of Education to receive comments on the revisions that will be reviewed by the board in February. Dr. DeMary pointed out that the revisions in the standards also affect the history and social science SOL tests and could mean that new cut scores would be required. Dr. Hatrick said that the results of the history and social science scores of students in his school division are not consistent with those on other SOL tests and suggested that some adjustment in the scores may be needed. Dr. Butler said VASS would analyze the scores and send the results to Dr. DeMary.

In response to a question, Dr. DeMary reported that the academic reviews of public schools accredited with warning were going well; 96 of 213 reviews were completed before Christmas.

Testing Window – Ms. Harris called attention to a superintendent's memo dealing with the spring 2001 Standards of Learning test dates. She said 25 responses had been received. Dr. Roberson expressed appreciation for the flexibility provided in the testing schedule, especially permitting school divisions to move the third and fifth grade tests closer to the end of the school year. The hope was expressed that more flexibility could be provided and that this is an issue that would be addressed.

Governor's Budget – Mr. Timberlake reviewed proposals made by Governor Gilmore for amendments to the 2000-2002 budget which will be considered by the Virginia General Assembly beginning January 10. Those proposals were included in a superintendent's memo dated December 22, 2000. Some discussion was devoted to a reduction in Virginia Retirement System employer rates for instructional and non-instructional personnel. As a result of the reduction, Mr. Timberlake pointed out, localities would receive more state funds for public education. Mr. Timberlake also called attention to proposed changes in the source of funds for school construction projects that are on the

Literary Fund's first priority waiting list. This proposal, if approved by the legislature, he said would be a significant departure from past procedure and would provide advantages for school divisions. He also noted that the Governor has proposed funding to expand the Academic Challenge Program, to continue the remediation-retesting program, and to continue the program to allow students who narrowly fail an SOL end-of-course test to retake the test as soon as possible.

2001 General Assembly Session – Mrs. Wescott distributed a report on bills carried over from the 2000 to the 2001 session of the Virginia General Assembly and new bills pre-filed in the legislature. Ms. Wescott told the superintendents that they will receive reports tracking legislation during the session of the General Assembly, as they have in the past.

Ms. Wescott also reviewed the agenda for the meeting of the Board of Education on January 11. She called attention to an item on the board's agenda that would provide for a school's accreditation rating to be calculated by combining the results of tests in each subject area into one passing rate per subject area. This item is included on the agenda for the first review by the board, with final action anticipated when it meets on February 15.

Technology Initiative Update – Mr. Neugent presented a report on progress being made in the demonstration phase of Governor Gilmore's Standards of Learning technology initiative. Students at nine high schools will participate in simulated electronic testing as the Department of Education moves to provide online SOL testing in every high school by 2003.

Mr. Neugent reported that contracts have been awarded to three vendors, and the demonstration sites selected include high schools in all sections of Virginia. The project provides funding and technology assistance for development of online testing and Web-based instructional and remedial programs.