

Meeting of the Superintendent's Leadership Advisory Council

Friday, May 11, 2001

Present: Superintendents' Group - Stewart D. Roberson, Edward L. Kelly, Timothy R. Jenney, Harry M. Ward, Edgar B. Hatrick, III, John H. Kidd, Ira R. Trollinger, Margaret V. Blackmon, Alfred R. Butler, IV, executive director, VASS, and Walter A. McFarlane, superintendent, Virginia Department of Correctional Education.

Department of Education – Jo Lynne DeMary, Kenneth Magill, Douglas Cox, Anne Wescott, Dan Timberlake, Margaret Roberts, Cam Harris, Bethann Canada, and Harry Smith.

Dr. DeMary opened the meeting and reminded the council members that school divisions and the Department of Education would be working under the 2000-2002 budget in lieu of any action by the recent session of the Virginia General Assembly. She also referred to the death of Board of Education member Jennifer Byler and her daughter in a boating accident and said her family needs everyone's thoughts and prayers.

The state superintendent recognized four members of the council who served during the past year and distributed certificates expressing appreciation for their assistance. Those who received the certificates were: Dr. Roberson, Mr. Ward, Dr. Hatrick, and Dr. Kidd.

Superintendents' Issues

Dr. Blackmon asked if a list of tests in vocational-technical education for verified credit is available. Dr. DeMary said the list of tests approved by the Board of Education will be distributed in a superintendent's memo. She stated that the board's action sends a message to parents and students about the value of vocational and technical education. Dr. DeMary reported that the board had approved more than 100 tests for verified credit, and its action was supported by the Accountability Advisory Committee.

In response to a question asking if anything is being done on regional testing for the Standards of Learning subjects, Dr. DeMary stated that money is not available for such an initiative.

Dr. Roberson requested an update on the status of discussions with the Standards of Learning testing contractor to separate scoring for grade 8 tests given in middle schools from scoring for tests given in elementary schools. Ms. Harris said that the

Department of Education is working with the publisher of the tests to correct the problem.

Mr. Ward referred to the cost of the state testing program in public schools and he wondered if additional testing can be anticipated from the federal government.

#### Report Card Committee

Dr. Roberson, chairman of the re-established Report Card Committee, said that the committee is scheduled to meet on May 14 to discuss the timeliness and impact of the report card and to make recommendations for improvement to the Accountability Advisory Committee. The recommendations will then be sent to the Board of Education. He said the Report Card Committee will welcome suggestions from superintendents.

#### Content Courses for Students with Disabilities

Mr. Cox recalled that in 1989 school divisions were told that they could use special education teachers to teach content area courses. As the result of revisions of special education regulations and standards of accreditation, teachers now must be endorsed for the subjects they teach. He said the Department of Education needs suggestions regarding the time needed for this transition and the impact on school divisions. During the discussion of this item, Dr. DeMary suggested that the 2002-2003 or the 2003-2004 school year be selected as the effective date for the transition. In response to suggestions, she said the department will use the year 2003-2004 unless she hears differently from superintendents. She said information will be sent to school divisions and she offered the department's assistance in making the transition.

#### VHSL Yearly Update

Ken Tilley, executive director of the Virginia High School League, reported that the league is working to update its communication efforts. He said schools will be assessed only one time for VHSL payments. Mr. Tilley also referred to legal issues involving the VHSL. He reported that the recent Student Leaders Conference attracted 850 students and was very successful. The league, he said, is looking for ways to increase revenue and expand services.

#### Budget Update

Dan Timberlake noted that the Virginia General Assembly had adjourned with no decision on state budget amendments and the commonwealth is operating under the 2000-2002 budget. He reported that all enrollment figures have been received from school divisions and the department will not have to prorate funding this year. He told the council not to anticipate additional revenue from the state.

#### General Assembly Update

Anne Wescott reported on final action by the Governor and the General Assembly on 2001 legislation. She presented a report on bills that were vetoed by the Governor, legislation that was amended, and bills that were not amended and were signed by the Governor. She said the final report is on the Web and a superintendent's memo will be distributed on legislation that requires action by school boards.

### Technology Initiative

Bethann Canada reported on progress in the Standards of Learning technology testing initiatives. She said the next step in the process involves selection of a vendor. Ms. Harris distributed copies of the draft of a form to be used by school divisions requesting reimbursement for the technology initiative. School divisions are expected to give priority in the use of grant funds to high schools. Following certification of the high schools, remaining grant money may be used to develop the SOL technology initiative in middle schools and then in elementary schools.

### Alternative to Praxis I

Dr. Magill noted that the Board of Education at its meeting in April approved an alternative to the Praxis I assessments for initial licensure of public school teachers. The board approved a composite score based on the sum of all three Praxis tests without a minimum score for each test. The composite scores of 532 for the pre-professional skills test and 973 for the computer-based test are based on current scores approved by the board. To compute the composite score, an individual must add the total scores of all three Pre-Professional Skills Tests or all three Computer-Based Tests. Combining PPST and CBT scores to achieve a composite score will not be accepted. A minimum score on each of the tests is not required, provided the composite score has been achieved.

### Report on Board of Education

Dr. Roberts reported on action taken by the Board of Education when it met on April 24 and approved the alternative for the Praxis I assessments, which was the main item on the agenda. She reported that the board planned to meet on the Eastern Shore on May 24, but the meeting has been moved to Richmond. Items for the May meeting include amendments to state special education regulations and completing work on secondary school transcript regulations. Dr. Roberts said the board will hold hearings on the proposed resource guide for history teachers on June 4 in Richmond and Wytheville.

The last item was an announcement by Dr. Magill that the Department of Education has received a request from an organization to be invited to attend the council meetings. Dr. Magill noted that representatives from that organization and other individuals had attended meetings of the council in the past, but a decision was made several years ago to limit attendance to school division superintendents. He asked if the council felt that meetings should be enlarged. The unanimous opinion was that it be limited to superintendents.