

**Meeting of the State Superintendent's Leadership Advisory Council
Friday, December 7, 2001**

Present: Superintendents' Group – Dorothea M. Shannon, Stephen R. Staples (for Timothy R. Jenney), Harry M. Ward, Thomas H. DeBolt, Lowell T. Lemons, Ira R. Trollinger, Robert C. McCracken, Gwen Edwards (for Margaret V. Blackmon), Walter A. McFarland, superintendent, Department of Correctional Education, Stewart D. Roberson, president-elect, VASS, and Alfred R. Butler, executive director, and Andy Stamp, assistant executive director, VASS.

Department of Education – Jo Lynne DeMary, M. Kenneth Magill, Shelley Loving-Ryder, Charles W. Finley, Dan Timberlake, Anne Wescott, Lan Neugent, Janet Christopher, Bethann Canada, and Harry L. Smith.

Dr. DeMary opened the meeting by asking the superintendents if they had issues of concern. Comments ranged from concern about the current financial condition of the commonwealth to opportunities for public school teachers to review Standards of Learning tests, especially those for history and social science, and a compatible system for school divisions to report data for students taking “paper and pencil” SOL tests and those taking the tests on computers.

The agenda for the meeting included the following:.

Timelines on Receiving SOL Test Cut Scores – Shelley Loving-Ryder distributed copies of Superintendents Memo 171 (Informational) dated December 7, 2001, containing information about new passing scores adopted by the Board of Education for four of the Standards of Learning history tests. She pointed out that the new scores apply only to tests developed for the 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 school years. She noted that new history standards were adopted by the board in 2001, and for the two transition years the history tests will assess content common to the 1995 and 2001 standards. The 2003-2004 tests will apply only to the 2001 SOL.

JLARC Report on Standards of Quality (SOQ) – Dan Timberlake reported on the study and recommendations of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission on November 20 on the state's funding formula for elementary and secondary schools. He stated that the Department of Education doesn't expect to have information on the Governor's budget requests before December 19. He said information on the budget will

be transmitted to school divisions by Friday of the week it becomes available. Dr. DeMary reported that the Board of Education is working as a “committee of the whole” to review the JLARC report and SOQ funding.

Report Card Committee – Dr. Roberson reported that on November 16 he met, as a representative of the Superintendent’s Ad Hoc Report Card Committee, with a Board of Education Committee to review information included on the School Report Card and to recommend data that could be eliminated to enable information to be released on a more timely basis. The committee recommended that the print copy of the school performance report card contain only the Standards of Learning (SOL) test scores and the accreditation rating for the school. Beginning in 2002 the print copy would also contain the scores of students participating in the alternate assessment program. The remainder of the report card information specified in the *Standards for Accrediting Schools* would be posted on the Department of Education (DOE) Web site, as it becomes available. The print copy of the report card would contain a note explaining that additional information might be found on the DOE Web site or obtained by contacting the local school division. To accommodate parents who might not have access to the Internet, the committee recommended that a printed copy of the information found on the Web site be maintained in the library of each school. The committee’s recommendations were approved by the Board of Education on November 27.

Additional Criteria for Accountability – Mr. Finley noted that a subcommittee of the Accountability Advisory Committee had been appointed to help the Board of Education to respond to bills introduced during the 2001 session of the Virginia General Assembly to provide multiple criteria for public school accreditation. He said the subcommittee found that such criteria already exist for student accountability and that the criteria may be sufficient when all students have had an opportunity to be involved “in a curriculum that is fully aligned to the Standards of Learning.” However, for transition students – first-time ninth graders in 2000-2001, 2001-2002, and 2002-2003 – the subcommittee found that “additional latitude” is required. The subcommittee, Mr. Finley pointed out, recommended an alternate method for awarding verified credit to students in the transition years when specific conditions are met by the school divisions and the students.

Technology Update – Mr. Neugent said that NCS Pearson is finalizing software for the testing comparability study the Department of Education plans to conduct in early spring. He said the software for the project is expected to be delivered in January of 2002. After the software is delivered, school divisions will work on the comparability study with some students taking pencil-and-paper Standards of Learning tests as well as taking the tests on-line. Mr. Neugent also said plans are progressing satisfactorily for the statewide regional video conferencing network to connect the Department of Education and the superintendents’ eight regional study groups. Bethann Canada reported that the Department of Education’s administrative staff has been working with student information systems users in school divisions. During a discussion of concerns related to

this effort, Dr. DeMary asked Dr. Magill to see how users in school divisions can work together to obtain a better product from NCS Pearson.

Local Eligibility License Report – Dr. Elliott presented a copy of a report prepared by the Department of Education on the use of the local eligibility license for public school teachers for the 2001-2002 school year compared with the 2000-2001 school year. He noted that 85 school divisions reported that no eligibility licenses were issued by their school boards in 2001-2002 compared with 91 in 2000-2001. Forty-seven school boards issued 321 local eligibility licenses in 2001-2002, compared with 234 issued in 2000-2001. Of the 321 licenses issued, the report said, 219 were to individuals who had previously held a three-year provisional license. Ninety-four of the licenses were issued for teachers of elementary education.

Consequential Validity – Ms. Loving-Ryder recalled that the Board of Education has a Technical Advisory Committee composed of national testing experts. The committee, she said, suggested that the board look at “consequential validity” – the effect of the SOL tests on students and teachers. She said the advisory committee will suggest to the Board of Education that detailed studies of the effects of the SOL assessment program be done if funds are available. Dr. DeMary said she looks forward to beginning the process, which, she said, should be done outside of the Department of Education.

The meeting adjourned following reports on items included on the Board of Education agendas for December 17 and January 2, 2002. The next meeting of the council is scheduled for Friday, January 11, 2002, beginning at 9:00 a.m.