

Report on the First Teleconference Network Superintendent's
Leadership Advisory Council Meeting

Friday, February 8, 2002

Present at the Department of Education: Jo Lynne DeMary, M. Kenneth Magill, Lan Neugent, Dan Timberlake, Anne Wescott, Charles Finley, Richard Schley, Walter MacFarlane, superintendent, Virginia Department of Correctional Education, Stuart Roberson, Harry Ward, and Harry Smith. All school divisions were involved in the teleconference.

Dr. DeMary opened the first teleconference network meeting of the Superintendent's Leadership Council and announced that Mark C. Christie had been named the new president of the Board of Education to succeed Kirk T. Schroder, and Susan L. Genovese had been selected to succeed Susan T. Noble as vice president. She also reported that Governor Warner had appointed two new members of the board, Mark E. Emblidge, former chairman of the Richmond City School Board, to replace Kirk Schroder, and former Democratic Delegate Tom Jackson to replace Mrs. Diane Atkinson, respectively.

Most of the meeting was devoted to a report on efforts by the Governor and the Virginia General Assembly to deal with state budget needs. Mr. Timberlake referred to Superintendent's Memo. No. 15 dated January 29, 2002, referring to Governor Warner's executive amendments to the state budget for 2002-2004. He responded to numerous questions about the budget. He said the House and Senate money committees' reports on the budget recommendations are scheduled for February 17, and he said the Department of Education will get information to school divisions by the following Friday, if possible. Superintendent Ira Trollinger congratulated Dan Timberlake for the information he has provided on the state budget and the template that, he said, was very helpful. Mr. Timberlake said he hopes to be able to provide templates for the House and Senate versions of the budget.

Mrs. Wescott gave a brief report on the status of legislation introduced in the General Assembly. She pointed out that because of current revenue needs the legislature, as a general rule, is not acting on bills that have a fiscal impact on the state budget.

Lan Neugent reported on the Standards of Learning technology initiative. He said the Department of Education has funds to continue the contract with the vendor, NCS; however, adjustments will be necessary in online testing due to lack of funds. He reported that the data collection portion of the agency's comparability study would be completed by February 8. Data will be reviewed by NCS and the department. He also said that a committee of department personnel, NCS, school division representatives, and

parents of children with disabilities met on February 5 to discuss online testing and accommodations for special education students. He also reported that assessment personnel in the Department of Education are developing policies and procedures for online testing “to mirror” those for paper-and-pencil testing.

Mr. Neugent said the Department of Education staff members would meet on February 21 with a representative from Weidenhammer to make sure the firm has all the information it needs about data collections and to plan for the impact of requirements of the new federal ESEA legislation. He asked if VASS had received a training proposal from the SASI system. Dr. Butler said he had not received it.

Dr. DeMary reported on the meeting of the Board of Education on Thursday, February 7. She said she and Mr. Christie will meet and plan ahead for 18 months during his tenure as president of the board. She mentioned two topics that she said were especially important: Standards of Quality and implementation of ESEA. Dr. DeMary stated that the department is working to prepare information about ESEA and wants to involve school division personnel “to help chart the path of the agency” in implementing the new federal act. She noted that the agency’s ESEA plan is due by April 15. She pointed out that school divisions that accept Title 1 funds will face changes in requirements for accountability. The real issue in the legislation, she said, is performance. School divisions will have more flexibility in how they use the federal money.

In response to a question about the status of the data disaggregator for the SOL tests, Mr. Neugent said the Department of Education is negotiating with the developer of the product to update it. He also said that the department will develop data disaggregator software to meet data requirements for ESEA.