

Attachment A to Informational Supts. Memo. No. 032

Meeting of the Superintendent's Leadership Advisory Council

Friday, February 14, 2003

Present: Superintendents' Group: Dorothea M. Shannon, Jonathan L. Lewis, Harry M. Ward, Thomas H. DeBord, Lowell T. Lemons, Frederick S. Morton, IV, Daniel S. Cook, Gwen E. Edwards, Stewart D. Roberson, John H. Kidd, Edgar B. Hatrick, III, Walter A. McFarlane, superintendent, Virginia Department of Correctional Education, and Alfred B. Butler, IV, and Andy Stamp, executive director, and assistant executive director, VASS.

Department of Education: Jo Lynne DeMary, Anne Wescott, Douglas Cox, Charles Finley, Dan Timberlake, Patricia Wright, Thomas Elliott, Lan Neugent, Cheri Magill, Patty Pitts, and Harry L. Smith.

Dr. DeMary opened the meeting by inviting the superintendents to introduce any issues that they would like to discuss. The following concerns were discussed:

- Department of Education representation at meetings of the superintendents' regional meetings. It was noted that with the recent retirement of Dr. Kenneth Magill, there is a need for communication among the superintendents and the Department of Education. Dr. DeMary pointed out that with the current state budget cuts, the department is not in a position to have a representative attend the regional study group meetings. Suggestions included a conference call for superintendents to communicate with Dr. DeMary and have an agency representative attend one regional meeting annually.
- Reimbursement of school divisions by the Department of Medical Assistance Services for claims for Medicaid for specific special education services. Mr. Cox distributed a chart showing changes in the reimbursement schedule and the resulting issues involved.

Mr. Cox said school divisions that were billed by DMAS last year will receive at least as much money for Medicaid this year. Dr. DeMary said the Department of Education has to have an effective relationship with DMAS; the education department's role is not to administer the program but to provide information. Dr. Morton requested written clarification about the billing procedure used by DMAS.

- Concern also was expressed about the future of the federal Carl A. Perkins legislation and the focus on competitive grants rather than on a formula-driven basis.
- Dr. Robertson expressed what he viewed as the need for the Department of Education to develop guidelines to help school divisions when changes are made to elevate federal security levels as part of the war on terrorism. He pointed out that if the nation goes to the red alert, superintendents are going to feel pressure to close public schools. He suggested that it would help school divisions if the Department of Education would notify school divisions that it is working with them in a time of crisis. Dr. DeMary emphasized the importance of the state agency and school divisions working together, and she thanked Dr. Robertson for his comments. Dr. Butler offered VASS's assistance.
- Dr. Kidd asked if the Board of Education is going to make any statement regarding federal mandates and funding for *No Child Left Behind* legislation. Dr. DeMary said the state has to convince federal officials to accept the Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook. Dr. Kidd reported that he had been informed that two states—Nebraska and Vermont—were looking at constitutional issues related to the *NCLB Act*. Dr. Morton expressed his hope that the Board of Education will look into the requirements of the act.
- Another issue involved a request for additional turnaround time for school divisions that request technology grants. Dr. DeMary explained the grant procedure and promised to review the problem. Superintendents said more time is needed to write requests for the grants and guidelines would help them prepare such requests.

Following the discussions of the superintendents' issues, the council members devoted attention to the following agenda:

### Budget Discussion

Dan Timberlake reviewed Governor Warner's recommendations for the 2003-2004 budget and the budgets adopted by the House of Delegates and the state Senate. He pointed out that the Governor did not propose any reductions in state funds for public education. He noted that the Senate has proposed a 2 percent increase in funds for teachers' salaries effective in December 2004. He said that a conference committee from both chambers of the General Assembly is working on a budget to be approved by the legislature and submitted to the Governor. Information about the Governor's budget recommendations and the House and Senate budget proposals was sent to superintendents on February 7.

Charles Finley reviewed the provisions of the Code of Virginia that require school divisions to provide 180 days or 990 clock hours of instruction during a school year and

make-up time lost because of inclement weather. He referred to the provision that gives the Board of Education the option of approving requests for waivers for the days and hours of instruction required. He pointed out that local school boards must show that an effort was made to make up the lost time. He said that a superintendent's memo would be sent to school divisions during the week of February 17 dealing with this matter.

#### No Child Left Behind Update

Dr. Patricia Wright distributed information about the state's implementation of the federal *No Child Left Behind Act*, "where we are today and where we are headed."

#### Update on 2003 Legislative Session

Anne Wescott distributed a summary of legislation acted on by the 2003 session of the Virginia General Assembly, exclusive of the state budget. She reported that about two-thirds of 160 bills and resolutions introduced in the legislature had been killed and some others were "in bad shape." She reviewed bills and resolutions that she believed were of interest to superintendents and their status at the time of the superintendents' meeting.

Mrs. Wescott also reported on items of the Board of Education's tentative agenda for its meeting on February 26.

#### Update on VITAL Program

Lan Neugent presented detailed information about the "VITAL" project (Virginia Initiative for Technology and Administrative Leadership) which he described as "an intense professional development leadership experience for principals and superintendents in Virginia," that provides an opportunity to use technology to support and improve teaching, learning, and leadership in Virginia's public schools.

#### Instructional Personal Survey Data

Dr. Elliott reviewed requirements of the *NCLB Act* for states to determine if a school district has made progress toward meeting the "measurable objectives" for increasing the quality of public school teachers. He pointed to the need to establish "baseline data" requested in the Instructional Personnel Survey requested of school divisions in Superintendent's Memo No. 61 dated September 27, 2002. Dr. Elliott said the Department of Education needs to know how many highly qualified teachers are in each school division. Dr. DeMary assured the superintendents that the department wants to work with them to collect accurate data.

Dr. Morton said his school division may not be able to meet the deadline of February 25 for the final phase of the survey, and he asked for an extension of time in which to submit the data. Dr. DeMary replied that such requests would be handled on a case-by-case basis.