

Meeting of the Superintendent's Leadership Advisory Council

Friday, September 12, 2003

Present: Superintendents' Group: J. Roy Geiger, II, Jonathan L. Lewis, Dale E. Sander, H. D. Northern, Jr., David G. Melton, Frederick S. Morton, IV, Samuel S. Cook, Gwen E. Edwards, Margaret V. Blackmon, Walter A. McFarlane, superintendent, Virginia Department of Correctional Education, John H. Kidd, Stewart D. Roberson, Edgar B. Hatrick, III, Alfred R. Butler, IV, executive director, and Andy Stamp, assistant executive director, VASS.

Department of Education: Jo Lynne DeMary, Dan Timberlake, Patricia Wright, Shelley Loving-Ryder, Anne Wescott, June Eanes, H. Douglas Cox, Thomas A. Elliott, and Harry L. Smith.

Dr. DeMary opened the meeting at 9 a.m. by commenting on the report released by the Department of Education on Virginia public schools' compliance with the federal government's definition of Adequate Yearly Progress required by the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001. This subject was discussed in more detail later in the meeting.

The state superintendent introduced Secretary of Administration Sandra D. Bowen and Jim Roberts, director, Department of General Services, who discussed eVA, the Internet-based electronic portal for purchases by state agencies, institutions, and many local governments.

Ms. Bowen emphasized the benefits that can result by having state agencies and school divisions work together to improve their purchasing practices. She said many practices that work efficiently for businesses also can work for the state government.

Secretary Bowen and Mr. Roberts told members of the council that they would be pleased to work with them to improve purchasing practices and reduce the time and costs involved. He said 171 state agencies and universities and 299 local government entities use eVA, including the data warehouse that provides access to information about purchasing; "what we are buying, from whom, and how often."

The council members agreed on the importance of the purchasing initiative, and said they would be glad to meet with Dr. Bowen and Mr. Roberts and see that the superintendents in their regional study groups are informed of the services available through eVA.

Other items on the council's agenda included the following:

### Education for a Lifetime

Dr. DeMary said information about this initiative of Governor Mark Warner's is available on the Web. Components of the program, which are being developed gradually, include high quality child care, renewed commitment to accountability, a request for proposals for an electronic educational assessment service to serve as a statewide database for all school divisions in Virginia, continuing commitment to the PASS initiative to help schools that are in danger of having accreditation problems, and giving rising seniors college credit in the final year of high school.

Dr. Hatrick said he believes that there is the need for more emphasis on career and technical education and its potential benefits for students who do not enroll in college.

### No Child Left Behind Act - Adequate Yearly Progress

Much of the meeting was devoted to a discussion of this topic. A press release prepared by the Department of Education stated that 55 percent of Virginia's public schools met the federal definition of Adequate Yearly Progress required by the *No Child Left Behind Act* during 2002-2003.

The AYP status of 88 schools is to be determined as a result of the small number of students tested in reading and mathematics. Additional information has been requested from those schools. Only 18 of 132 school divisions in Virginia met the AYP requirements. Superintendents were concerned about the information and its impact on their school divisions. For a school or school division to meet AYP requirements, it must meet or exceed 29 to 35 benchmarks for participation in statewide testing, achievement in reading and mathematics, and attendance in elementary or middle schools or graduation from high school. If a school or school division does not meet a single benchmark it would not meet AYP requirements.

Dr. DeMary emphasized the importance of all school superintendents' groups discussing the AYP standards and providing the required information for the report card. Dr. Hatrick suggested that information be put on printable spreadsheets and efforts be increased to promote better communication. In response to a question about teacher licensure issues, he was informed that Virginia has the highest cut scores in the nation on PRAXIS tests that are required for licensure.

During the discussion of AYP requirements, Dr. Hatrick distributed a list of suggestions for the Department of Education to help school divisions comply with the federal requirements.

### Discipline, Crime, and Violence Reporting

Dr. DeMary pointed out that decisions have to be made regarding the crime and violence report to meet the safe schools requirement of the *NCLB Act*, and she asked for suggestions. She said the Department of Education in its report required by the General Assembly has never asked for any information not required by law. She noted that a three-digit code is required for reporting these data, but that the agency can provide sub-categories in an addenda for school divisions. The superintendents' response was "keep it simple."

Several items on the agenda were postponed until the next meeting of the council, which is scheduled for November 21.