

Attachment A to Info. Supts. Memo No. 18

Meeting of the Superintendent's Leadership Advisory Council

Friday, January 9, 2004

Present: Superintendents' Group: J. Roy Geiger, II, Jonathan L. Lewis, H. D. Northern, Jr., David G. Melton, Jane Massey-Wilson, Frederick S. Morton, IV, Samuel S. Cook, John H. Kidd, Edgar B. Hatrick, III, and Andy Stamp, assistant executive director, VASS.

Department of Education: Jo Lynne DeMary, Anne Wescott, Pat Wright, Dan Timberlake, Shelley Loving-Ryder, Thomas Elliott, and Harry L. Smith.

Dr. DeMary opened the meeting, wishing the superintendents a happy new year. There was follow-up discussion regarding the exchange of fingerprinting results for teachers among school divisions and duplication of costs involved. Dr. DeMary said the Department of Education is looking at options to eliminate this problem.

Two topics consumed most of the meeting—the Governor's budget proposals for 2004-2006 and the decision by the Board of Education on January 7 to ask the Virginia General Assembly for expanded authority to assist students in historically low-performing school divisions.

Dan Timberlake discussed the Governor's "Caboose Bill" budget amendments for the period from July 1, 2003, to June 30, 2004, which will be considered by the 2004 session of the Virginia General Assembly and the budget proposals affecting direct aid to public education and the Department of Education for the 2004-2006 biennium.

Mr. Timberlake stated that the "Caboose Bill" recommendations by the Governor for direct aid to public education are mostly technical adjustments to the Standards of Quality, incentive, and categorical accounts. The Governor's recommendations, he said, include funding for the state's share of all Standards of Quality programs and continuation of all existing and categorical programs.

Details of this budget proposal and those for the 2004-2006 biennium had been distributed to superintendents by the Department of Education after they were presented by the Governor on December 17, 2003. Mr. Timberlake discussed details of the 2004-2006 budget and responded to superintendents' questions. He noted that the 2004-2006 budget requests include five items that are dependent upon the success of the Governor's tax reform plan.

At one point during the discussion, Dr. Jonathan Lewis said it would be helpful if the department would send a memo explaining how the budget calculations are developed. Dr. Morton said he believed superintendents would like to have a brief summary (one sheet) explaining the mechanics of the budget process. Dan Timberlake responded by saying that he will send the information with a spreadsheet.

Anne Wescott provided information about the Board of Education's decision to seek General Assembly assistance for dealing with school divisions that in the words of Board President Thomas M. Jackson, Jr., are consistently "denying their students a quality education."

The legislation proposed would require school boards to maintain schools that are fully accredited and strengthen the authority of the Board of Education and the Department of Education to conduct academic reviews of divisions that have been warned or have been denied accreditation because of poor student achievement.

Mrs. Wescott said the proposed legislation is intended to close a gap in the board's authority to deal with the improvement of lowest-performing schools. She also stated that the proposal came from the Board of Education Committee on Lowest-Performing Schools headed by Mark Emblidge. During the discussion of the proposal, concern was expressed about the extension of the board's authority that could be a problem in the future, about the timing of the board's action, and whether or not it would be approved by the General Assembly. The board's proposal includes a provision that the criteria for determining the school divisions affected would be included in the board's regulations.

Mrs. Wescott also reviewed legislation approved by the Board of Education related to the Standards of Quality, assessment of students, school accreditation standards, and other issues including Governor Warner's Education for a Lifetime proposal. Mrs. Wescott also provided information about some items included on the board's agenda at its meeting on January 7, 2004.

Dr. Elliott gave details of Virginia's proposed High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) for Experienced Teachers that was presented to the Board of Education for first review. He noted that the federal *No Child Left Behind Act* requires experienced teachers to be designated as highly qualified by the 2005-2006 school year, and explained options for meeting that requirement. He distributed information about *NCLB* requirements and options recommended in HOUSSE for elementary, middle, secondary, and preK-12 teaching assignments. The HOUSSE requirements will be presented to the board for final review on February 25.

Dr. Elliott also distributed information about the Great Virginia Teach-In, a recruiting and information fair designed for teachers considering a career move to Virginia. The Teach-In is scheduled to be held March 27-28, 2004, at the Greater Richmond Convention Center.

Mrs. Shelley Loving-Ryder distributed copies of the Federal Register containing the final regulations for Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged administered under Title I, Part A, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and a list of questions and answers related to the regulations. These regulations are designed to implement statutory provisions affecting the accountability of states, local educational agencies, and schools for the academic achievement of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and are needed to implement changes to Title I of the ESEA made by the *No Child Left Behind Act*. The regulations became effective January 8, 2004.

Dr. DeMary provided a folder of information to the superintendents regarding the School Information Partnership. The Governor's interests in the use of data to improve school results has led to Virginia being selected as one of the first states to be included in this national program. Phase one of this partnership is focused on the creation of a public Web site designed to help parents, educators, and policymakers use the education data required to be publicly reported by the *NCLB Act*. The launch of this initiative will take place on January 29.

In the absence of other items, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, February 13, at 9 a.m.