

Background and Overview of The Standards of Quality (SOQ)

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Constitutional Authority

“Standards of quality for the several school divisions shall be determined and prescribed from time to time by the Board of Education, subject to revision only by the General Assembly.”

Article VIII, § 2, Constitution of Virginia



Constitutional Authority

“The General Assembly shall determine the manner in which funds are to be provided for the cost of maintaining an educational program meeting the prescribed standards of quality, and shall provide for the apportionment of the cost of such program between the Commonwealth and the local units of government comprising such school divisions.”

Article VIII, § 2, Constitution of Virginia



History of SOQ

- **1971** Board of Education adopts first SOQ.
- **1972** General Assembly revises and adopts SOQ as uncodified acts.
- **1984** Codified into the *Code of Virginia*.
- **2001** Board establishes its SOQ Committee to biennially review the SOQ.
- **2002** General Assembly codifies biennial SOQ review requirement.
- **2004** Most recent reorganization of the SOQ adopted by General Assembly.



The Board of Education's Role with SOQ:

- To prescribe broad policies to ensure that each public school in is a school of quality and that each child has access to a school that will offer a quality education.
- To evaluate and report on the condition and needs of public education.
- To determine whether revisions to the Standards of Quality are necessary.



SOQ Review

In October 2001, the Board of Education bylaws were amended to require:

- Review of the SOQ no less than once every two years.
- The Board to establish, by resolution, the process for such review.
- Results of review and recommendations to be communicated to the Governor and Chairs of House Education, House Appropriation, Senate Education and Health and Senate Finance Committees.



SOQ Review

In November 2001, the Board of Education by resolution established the SOQ Committee, which is tasked with:

“determining the information to be reviewed to determine the condition and needs of public education; determining the process to be used to complete this comprehensive review; establishing a time line that anticipates a report to the full Board followed by a review and revision of the Standards of Quality, if appropriate; and developing the format to be utilized for the annual report.”



SOQ Review

In 2002, the General Assembly established § 22.1-18.01 of the Code, which states:

“A. To ensure the integrity of the standards of quality, the Board of Education shall, in even-numbered years, exercise its constitutional authority to determine and prescribe the standards, subject to revision only by the General Assembly, by reviewing the standards and either (i) proposing amendments to the standards or (ii) making a determination that no changes are necessary

B. In any odd-numbered year following the year in which the Board proposes changes to the standards of quality, the budget estimates that are required to be reported pursuant to § [2.2-1504](#) shall take into consideration the Board's proposed standards of quality.”



§§ 22.1-253.13:1 through 22.1-253.13:10, Code of Virginia

- 1. Instructional programs supporting the Standards of Learning and other educational objectives**
- 2. Instructional, administrative, and support personnel**
- 3. Accreditation, other standards, assessments, and releases from state regulations**
- 4. Student achievement and graduation requirements**
- 5. Quality of classroom instruction and educational leadership**
- 6. Planning and public involvement**
- 7. School board policies**
- 8. Compliance**
- 9. Virginia Index of Performance incentive program**
- 10. Standards of Learning Innovation Committee**



Summary of the Standards of Quality

Standard 1. Instructional programs supporting the Standards of Learning and other educational objectives.

- Requires the Board of Education to establish the Standards of Learning (SOL), which shall be consistent with a high-quality foundation educational programming.
- Requires school divisions to provide:
 - A program of instruction that meets or exceeds the Board's requirements
 - A curriculum aligned to the SOLs
 - Prevention, Intervention and Remediation



Summary of the Standards of Quality

Standard 2. Instructional, administrative, and support personnel.

- Requires the Board to establish teacher licensure requirements.
- Requires school divisions to employ teachers licensed in the relevant subject area.
- Establishes minimum student to staff ratios.
- Interacts closely with Appropriation Act language.



Summary of the Standards of Quality

Standard 3. Accreditation, other standards, assessments, and releases from state regulations.

- Requires the Board to establish the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (Standards of Accreditation).
- Requires school boards to maintain schools that are fully accredited and submit corrective action plans for those not meeting accreditation standards.
- Requires the Board to prescribe SOL assessments for certain subject areas.



Summary of the Standards of Quality

Standard 4. Student achievement and graduation requirements.

- Establishes the Standard, Advanced Studies, and Applied Studies diplomas, as well as Certificates of Program Completion, as prescribed by the Board of Education.
- Permits local school boards, with Board approval, to prescribe additional graduation requirements.



Summary of the Standards of Quality

Standard 5. Quality of classroom instruction and educational leadership.

- Requires the Board to participate in high-quality professional development programs on personnel, curriculum, and current issues.
- Requires the Board to provide guidance and technical assistance on high-quality professional development.
- Requires professional development for school board members, superintendents, principals, and teachers.
- Requires school boards to provide a program of high-quality professional development.



Summary of the Standards of Quality

Standard 6. Planning and public involvement.

- Requires the Board to adopt and periodically review a statewide comprehensive, unified, long-range plan.
- Requires school boards to adopt and periodically review a comprehensive, unified long-range plan.
- Requires each public school to adopt such a plan.



Summary of the Standards of Quality

Standard 7. School board policies.

- Requires school divisions to maintain and periodically review a policy manual, and prescribes certain components.



Summary of the Standards of Quality

§ 22.1-253.13:8: Compliance

- Requires school boards to annually certify compliance with the SOQs.
- Authorizes the Board to seek compliance with the SOQ.



Summary of the Standards of Quality

§ 22.1-253.13:9: Virginia Index of Performance Program

- Establishes the program to provide for schools and divisions to be recognized and rewarded for full accreditation and progress in certain areas.

§ 22.1-253.13:10: Standards of Learning Innovation Committee

- Establishes the Committee to make recommendations to the Board on SOL assessments, individual growth measures, alignment between the SOL, assessments and School Performance Report Cards, and innovative teaching.

