

Standards of Quality (SOQ) Review

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The Standards of Quality

Shared goals of the General Assembly and the Board of Education:

“to enable each student to develop skills necessary for success in school, preparation for life, and reaching full potential.”

Code of Virginia § 22.1-253.13:1(A)



The Standards of Quality

“The General Assembly and the Board of Education find that the quality of education is dependent upon the provision of” ...

- **High-quality instructional personnel**
- **A learning environment designed to promote student achievement**
- **Quality instruction enabling each student to become a productive and educated citizen**
- **Adequate commitment of resources**

Code of Virginia § 22.1-253.13:1(A)



Needs and Priorities Impacting the SOQ

- **Needs related to High School Redesign**
- **Build capacity in schools to support the unique needs of all students, teachers, and administrators (priority established in the Board's Annual Report)**
 - **Identify where local practices exceed state recognized staffing practices.**
 - **Provide school divisions with flexibility while ensuring a minimum level of quality is maintained**



Needs related to High School Redesign



School Counselor Staffing

Issue: Additional school counselor positions needed to support high school redesign efforts.

- Individual student planning time will be critical to implement the redesigned high school diploma.
- Counselor duties have expanded to include non-counseling roles, such as: testing, clerical, discipline, social worker.
- Existing Virginia counselor to student ratio is approximately 1:320.
- SOQ-funded positions are provided for approximately 1:410.
- The American School Counselor Association's recommended staff ratio is 1:250 (4 positions per 1,000).

Consideration: What would the appropriate staffing ratio for school counselors be to meet this future demand?

Standard 2



Career and Technical Education Staffing

Issues: Career and Technical Education (CTE) staffing may not meet existing and future needs.

- CTE staffing ratios may have become outdated since the implementation of curricular pathways that require high-tech equipment and specialized instruction.
- High school redesign and Profile of a Graduate may create more demand for CTE staff as career exploration and work-based learning experiences expand.

Consideration: Will CTE staffing resources be adequate with the implementation of the high school redesign?

Standard 2



Professional Development

Issue: Successful implementation of the high school redesign will require adequate professional development at all levels, before, during and after implementation.

- Teaching has been focused on instruction techniques and assessment geared toward content knowledge.
- The teacher workforce will need introduction to new concepts, such as capstone projects, independent study, portfolios and work-based learning.
- Professional development will be needed for principals and teachers on the leadership skills, instructional strategies and assessment methods needed to implement the “5 C’s.”
- Discrete state aid to school divisions for professional development is not a component of the SOQ.

Considerations: What are the professional development needs associated with the Profile of a Graduate?

Standard 5



Awareness of Available Pathways

Issue: Currently, schools are required to notify parents and students of AP, IB, and Governor's school opportunities; similar notification is not required for career and technical education (CTE) opportunities.

- Awareness of all possible pathways to graduation will be critical as the high school redesign is implemented.

Consideration: Should parents and students be assured that they are informed of all educational opportunities, regardless of student performance or selected pathways?

Standard 1



Build Capacity:

***Identify where local practices exceed state
recognized staffing practices***



Assistant Principals

Issue: The number of assistant principal positions funded through the SOQ does not align with local practices

- School divisions employ 2,554 assistant principals, while SOQ funds are only provided for 923 positions.
- Existing Virginia assistant principal to student ratio is approximately 1:475.
- SOQ-funded positions are provided for approximately 1:1,315.
- Prior Boards have recommended 1:400 students (2.5 positions per 1,000)

Consideration: What is the appropriate state-recognized staffing ratio for assistant principals?

Standard 2



Elementary Principals

Issue: Providing effective leadership in small elementary schools on a part-time basis.

- Elementary schools of 299 or fewer students are only provided a half-time principal.
- Approximately 12 percent of elementary schools have 299 or fewer students.
- Most small elementary schools are provided a full-time principal using local funds.

Consideration: Is a part-time principal sufficient for small schools? Would providing additional flexibility to deploy principals based on need be appropriate?

Standard 2



Support Position Cap

Issue: The Appropriation Act has capped the number of SOQ-funded support positions at the ratio of 1 support position for every 4.03 instructional positions.

- This ratio was selected based upon existing conditions as of 2009, and has not been adjusted to reflect changes in local staffing practices.
- Economic conditions have since improved.
- This overrides Standard Two, which establishes that prevailing staffing practices should dictate the number of funded positions.

Consideration: Should the the Appropriation Act be amended to eliminate the cap on support position funding?

Standard 2



Build Capacity:

Provide school divisions with flexibility while ensuring a minimum level of quality is maintained



Support Positions

- **Issue:** No minimum staffing level exists for student support positions such as school psychologists, school nurses, or social workers.
 - Since 2008, the number of:
 - Students living in poverty has increased by 40%
 - English Language Learners has increased by 37%
 - Students with autism has increased by 45%
 - Students with other health impairments has increased by 10%
 - School divisions may opt to divert state funding for support positions toward instructional positions.
- **Consideration:** Should minimum staffing levels be established for these positions, or should local discretion remain?

Standard 2



Recession-Era Staffing Waivers

Issue: Since 2009, Appropriation Act language has waived significant staffing requirements in Standard 2, a measure taken in response to the financial crisis.

- **These waivers override staffing requirements for:**
 - Elementary resource teachers
 - Remediation positions
 - ESL teachers
 - CTE teachers (unless federal requirements apply)
 - Maximum student to teacher ratios have also been increased by one student.
 - Gifted Teachers
 - Guidance counselors (new hires only)
 - Librarians (new hires only)
 - Technology support positions
- **Economic conditions have since improved.**
- **These provisions undermine significant parts of Standard 2, which is intended to ensure a minimum level of staffing across the Commonwealth.**

Consideration: How are school divisions utilizing these waivers? Where have school divisions diverting the resources associated with these positions? Do these waivers continue to be appropriate?



SOQ Review Cycle

Issue: The Board's SOQ recommendations are transmitted to the Governor mid-biennium.

- SOQ recommendations could better inform Governor's biennial budget, which is developed in odd-numbered years.
- Consistent with prior Board recommendations.

Recommendation: Shift the Board's SOQ review from even to odd-numbered years.



Next Steps

- **July/August** **Public Hearings**
- **September** **First Review of Proposed Recommendations**
- **October** **Final Review**

