

Board of Education Agenda Item

Item: J.

Date: September 25, 2008

Topic: First Review of the Standards of Quality

Presenter: Ms. Anne D. Wescott, Assistant Superintendent for Policy and Communications

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Origin:

Topic presented for information only (no board action required)

Board review required by
 State or federal law or regulation
 Board of Education regulation
 Other: _____

Action requested at this meeting Action requested at future meeting: November 20, 2008

Previous Review/Action:

No previous board review/action
 Previous review/action
date _____
action _____

Background Information: Article VIII, § 2 of the *Constitution of Virginia* requires the Board of Education to determine and prescribe Standards of Quality for the public schools in Virginia. The *Constitution* says:

“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. 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. Each unit of local government shall provide its portion of such cost by local taxes or from other available funds.”

The *Code of Virginia* requires the Board of Education to review the Standards of Quality every two years. Section 22.1-18.01 of the *Code* says, in part:

“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....”

The *Code* also requires that the Board’s annual report to the Governor and General Assembly include any recommendations for revisions to the Standards of Quality. Section 22.1-18 of the *Code* says, in part:

“...the Board of Education shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly a report on the condition and needs of public education in the Commonwealth and shall identify any school divisions and the specific schools therein which have failed to establish and maintain schools meeting the existing prescribed standards of quality. Such standards of quality shall be subject to revision only by the General Assembly, pursuant to Article VIII, Section 2 of the Constitution of Virginia. Such report shall include a complete listing of the current standards of quality for the Commonwealth's public schools, together with a justification for each particular standard, how long each such standard has been in its current form, and whether the Board recommends any change or addition to the standards of quality.”

On August 7, 1971, the Board of Education adopted the first Standards of Quality (SOQ). They were revised by the General Assembly in 1972 and adopted as uncodified Acts of Assembly. In 1974, they were revised into eight standards. In 1984, they were codified by the General Assembly, and in 1988 they were arranged into their current format.

The Board of Education revised its bylaws in October 2001 to require the Board to “determine the need for a review of the SOQ from time to time but no less than once every two years. The Standing Committee on the Standards of Quality was created by resolution of the Board of Education in November 2001 and held its first meeting in January 2002.

The Board has made recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly, or has reaffirmed previous recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly, on June 25, 2003, November 17, 2004, October 26, 2005, November 29, 2006, and November 29, 2007.

Summary of Major Elements: The proposed resolution would reaffirm the Board’s commitment to the seven staffing recommendations that have not yet been funded while recognizing the budget constraints facing the Governor and General Assembly during the 2009 Session. The proposed resolution would ask that consideration of these additional staffing recommendations be made when the revenue picture has improved.

Furthermore, in the event that funding for K-12 public education must be reduced as a result of declining revenues, the Board would urge the Governor and the General Assembly to give local school boards flexibility in meeting the staffing requirements in the Standards of Quality while maintaining accountability requirements in the Standards of Learning program.

Superintendent's Recommendation: The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board accept the proposed resolution for first review.

Impact on Resources: The impact on state funds for the review of the Standards of Quality is expected to be minimal and can be absorbed within current resources.

Timetable for Further Review/Action: This item will be presented to the Board of Education for final review on November 20, 2008.

**EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
ON FUNDING THE STANDARDS OF QUALITY:
FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE GOVERNOR AND
THE 2009 SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

WHEREAS, the Virginia Board of Education wishes to communicate its spending priorities to the Governor and the General Assembly for their consideration as they make budget decisions; and

WHEREAS, the Board believes nonetheless that public education is of the highest priority in the state budget, and that the Standards of Quality (SOQ) is the foundation program for public education in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the Standards of Quality define the minimum foundation the Commonwealth must provide to meet its constitutional obligation to maintain “an educational program of high quality” for the children of Virginia;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education reaffirms its commitment to the seven staffing recommendations that have not yet been funded while recognizing the budget constraints facing the Governor and General Assembly during the 2009 Session. The Board asks that consideration of these additional staffing recommendations be made when the revenue picture has improved.

Moreover, in the event that funding for K-12 public education must be reduced as a result of declining revenues, the Board urges the Governor and the General Assembly to give local school boards flexibility in meeting the staffing requirements in the Standards of Quality while maintaining accountability requirements in the Standards of Learning program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board’s position contained herein shall be communicated to the Governor and the 2009 General Assembly for their consideration.

**Estimated Cost of the Board of Educations Unfunded SOQ Recommendations
Fiscal Year 2009-2010**

Require one full-time position per 1,000 students in grades kindergarten through 12 to provide schools support in data management and the utilization and administration of state assessments. The data manager/test coordinator would hold a license issued by the Board of Education and would serve as a resource to principals and classroom teachers in analyzing and interpreting data for instructional purposes;	\$ 43.4 million
Require one full-time principal in every elementary school, middle school, and high school;	8.0 million
Require one assistant principal for each 400 students in every elementary school, middle school, and high school;	59.3 million
Require one full-time equivalent instructional position for each 1,000 students in average daily membership to serve as reading specialists for the school division;	43.4 million
Require local school boards to employ speech-language pathologists in sufficient numbers to ensure that a caseload does not exceed 60 students per position;	4.6 million
Require one full-time instructional position for each 1,000 students in grades kindergarten through eight to serve as the mathematics teacher specialist; and	29.5 million
Require local school boards to employ instructional and paraprofessional staff to ensure the following maximum pupil-teacher ratios for students who are blind or vision impaired: Level I, resource teacher, 24 to one, Level II, self-contained with an aide, 10 to one; self-contained without an aide, eight to one; or Level II, self-contained, student weight of 2.5.	3.8 million
Total	\$192.0 million