

Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item



Agenda Item: K

Date: November 19, 2015

Title	Annual Report from the Virginia Council for Private Education		
Presenter	Dr. Kathleen Smith, State Director of AdvancED and Member of the Virginia Council for Private Education Board of Directors Josie Webster, Executive Director, Virginia Council for Private Education		
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Purpose of Presentation:

For information only. No action required.

Previous Review or Action:

No previous review or action.

Action Requested:

No action requested.

Alignment with Board of Education Goals: Please indicate (X) all that apply:

	Goal 1: Accountability for Student Learning
	Goal 2: Rigorous Standards to Promote College and Career Readiness
	Goal 3: Expanded Opportunities to Learn
	Goal 4: Nurturing Young Learners
	Goal 5: Highly Qualified and Effective Educators
	Goal 6: Sound Policies for Student Success
	Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools
X	Other Priority or Initiative. Specify: Annual Report from the Virginia Council for Private Education

Background Information and Statutory Authority:

In November 1993, the Board of Education adopted a resolution that recognized the accrediting process for nonpublic elementary and secondary schools as administered through the Commission on Accreditation of the Virginia Council for Private Education (VCPE). The resolution was primarily for the purpose of public school acceptance of credits earned by students who attended such schools when they transfer to public schools and for any other such purpose(s) which may, from time to time, be specified by the *Code of Virginia* or as may be mutually agreed upon by the Board and VCPE. The resolution specifies, among other things, that the Board of Education will receive an annual report from VCPE.

Summary of Important Issues:

VCPE facilitates a statewide framework for communication and cooperation among private schools, their public school counterparts, state and local governments, and other agencies and organizations.

VCPE oversees accreditation of nonpublic preschool, elementary and secondary schools in the Commonwealth as authorized by the Virginia Board of Education in §22.1-19 of the *Code of Virginia*. State recognized accreditation comes through accreditation granted by any VCPE approved accrediting organization.

All approved accrediting organizations must meet the VCPE core set of standards. The VCPE peer review process and an annual reporting requirement have been developed to monitor the standards. Each association has standards that meet and exceed those that are monitored by VCPE and must be considered individually by an interested school.

There are currently 14 VCPE approved accrediting associations. Please see the attached briefing and report for more information.

Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:

None

Timetable for Further Review/Action:

None

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education receive the Annual Report from the Virginia Council for Private Education.

VCPE

Virginia Council for Private Education Virginia's Unique Accountability System for Private School Quality

VCPE facilitates a statewide framework for communication and cooperation among private schools, their public school counterparts, state and local governments, and other agencies and organizations.

VCPE adheres to its original purposes to:

- Assist in the maintenance and improvement of the quality of Virginia's nonpublic schools;
- Approve of and review the accrediting processes for state recognized accrediting member associations in the Commonwealth;
- Annually review reports from VCPE member organizations, which demonstrate adherence to policies and standards of VCPE;
- Ensure that the member associations establish and maintain in their schools' general policies and standards for excellence;
- Furnish information about, and articulate the private school viewpoint on educational matters relating to both the public and the private sector;
- Serve as a vehicle through which the public school viewpoint may be conveyed to the nonpublic school constituency;
- Coordinate efforts within the nonpublic school community in order to maintain nonpublic schools as a viable and responsible educational alternative;
- Enhance opportunities for more families to have a realistic choice among schools for their children;
- Encourage vigorous diversity in education; and,
- Encourage a broad public commitment to excellence in education.

What is State Recognized Accreditation?

VCPE oversees accreditation of nonpublic preschool, elementary and secondary schools in the Commonwealth as authorized by the Virginia Board of Education in §22.1-19 of the Code of Virginia. State recognized accreditation comes through accreditation granted by any VCPE approved accrediting organization.

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Why Seek Accreditation?

State recognized accreditation is accountability for private schools in Virginia. Many private schools in Virginia seek accreditation as a means of strengthening their programs and facilities and assuring the public that the published purpose and philosophy of a school are being fulfilled.

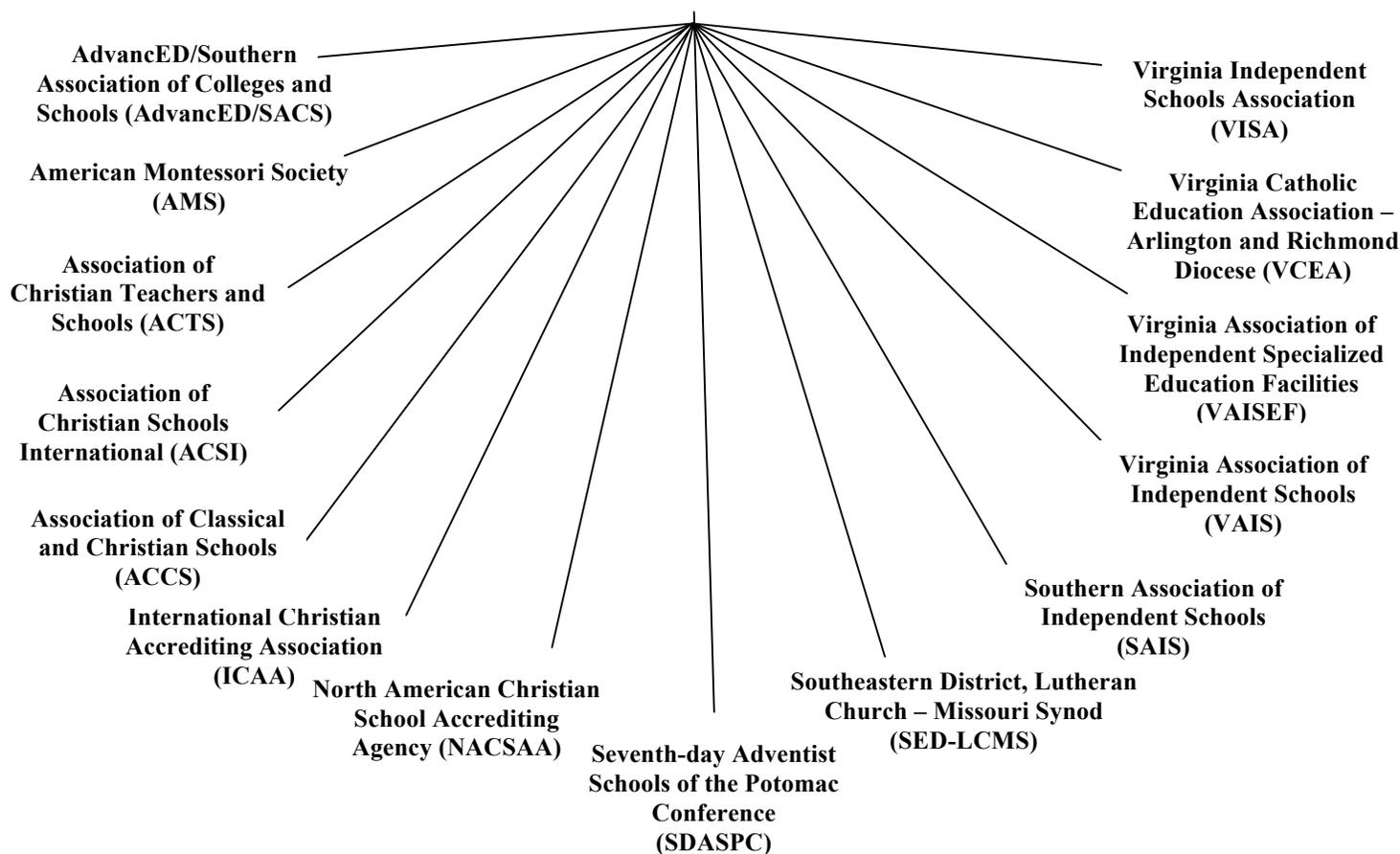
Accreditation through a VCPE approved accrediting organization guarantees the transfer of student credits from the state recognized accredited private school to a public school and ensures recognition of teacher licensure credits for time served in an accredited private school.

VCPE Approved Accrediting Associations

Pursuant to §22.1-19 of the Code of Virginia

Virginia Board of Education Authorizes VCPE to Oversee Accreditation of Nonpublic Schools

14 State Recognized Accrediting Associations



Other VCPE Member Associations

- Association of Military Colleges and Schools of the United States (AMCSUS)
- Church Schools of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia (CSEDV)
- Christian School International (CSI)
- International League of Christian Schools (ILCS)
- Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association (VISAA)

PEER REVIEW PROCESS FOR ACCREDITING ASSOCIATIONS

Step by Step Overview

State recognized accreditation through a VCPE approved association is a means of strengthening private school programs and facilities and assuring the public that the published purpose and philosophy of a school are being fulfilled.

VCPE is the conduit for school accreditation granted by the approved accrediting member associations. The peer review process is a means of monitoring and ensuring accountability of the association standards through initial and subsequent reviews scheduled every three to five years.

Although all VCPE member associations may participate in the peer review process as observers, only associations that have or desire to have a state recognized accreditation process are subject to periodic reviews. The following is an outline of the steps involved in the process:

1. Association is scheduled in VCPE Peer Review queue every three to five years for each individual accreditation component. The association must complete a self study using the *Accreditation Standards for All Accrediting Associations* form. All standards are verified by the VCPE observer for all reviews. The *Standards Form for Early Childhood Learning Program Accreditation* must be used for associations accrediting schools serving birth through age two. The *Standards Form for Systems Accreditation* must be used for associations accrediting private school systems. The *Standards Form for Virtual School Accreditation* must be used for associations accrediting virtual school programs. (300.1.A.2)
2. Association must submit potential site visit locations and dates to the VCPE Office when the association is scheduled
3. VCPE Peer Observer is selected by the Chair of the Accreditation Committee with the assistance of the VCPE Office
4. VCPE Office sends preliminary communication including details of the VCPE review process and contact information for both the observer and the association under review along with the dates and location of the review
5. Association under review must facilitate direct communication with the VCPE Peer Observer
6. VCPE Office distributes peer review forms and other supporting documentation to VCPE Peer Observer and the association under review and continues to provide support when needed during review to both parties
7. The association under review submits a self-study to the VCPE Observer and the VCPE Office at least four weeks prior to the review
8. VCPE Peer Observer completes paperwork and submits to the VCPE Office within two weeks after the review
9. VCPE Office reviews paperwork to ensure that it is complete and moves the paperwork forward for review by the Accreditation Committee
10. The VCPE Peer Observer is invited to attend the Accreditation Committee to present the report but is not required to attend
11. The Accreditation Committee discusses the review and decides whether to move a recommendation forward to the Board of Directors or to re-direct questions back to the association
12. The recommendation from the Accreditation Committee is not final until the Board of Directors accepts the report and the Accreditation Committee recommendation.
13. The Board has the authority not to accept the report and/or the recommendation and to move an independently formulated decision forward.

EARLY EDUCATION AND VCPE

A Comparison of Quality Improvement Systems

Level 1: Basic Health and Safety. Early learning program must be in good standing with all requirements of their regulating authority.

VCPE Standards:

VCPE accredited schools must be in full compliance with all aspects of the law. The Peer Review process provides guidance to VCPE observers on how to address and assess compliance for every VCPE standard.

- 300.2.B.3.a.v. Conformance with appropriate state and federal legal requirements including but not limited to the information provided in the most recent edition of *Virginia Law and Private Schools: A Guide to Opening and Operating a Private School in Virginia*.
- 300.3.A.6 Health and Safety. Legal requirements including but not limited to licensure or evidence of a valid exemption from licensure for schools that 1) serve children under the age of eligibility for kindergarten; 2) offer before or after school care for children up to age 12; or 3) offer programs during the summer that are not an extension of the accredited program.

Level 2: Education and Qualifications

Teachers in Virginia's QRIS programs have some formal education to deliver high quality services to children and families that are focused on promoting school readiness.

- At least one administrator/director has earned 24 child-related credits from an accredited college, meets level 6 on Virginia's Early Childhood Career Lattice OR holds an early education credential from a VCPE approved accrediting association.
- At least half of lead teachers hold an early education credential from a VCPE approved accrediting association OR meet level 3 on Virginia's Early Childhood Career Lattice.

VCPE Standards:

- 300.2.B.3.a.viii. Professional personnel and staff
 - 1) Teacher credentials and early childhood competencies, if applicable.
 - 2) Professional development and continuing education as appropriate for students served.
 - 3) Policies on staff qualifications including but not limited to job descriptions, personnel handbook, performance evaluations and criminal background checks.
- 300.3.A.1 Faculty
 - a) Teacher credentials/early childhood competencies of faculty
 - b) Professional development and continuing education related to quality early childhood care and education

Level 3: Curriculum and Assessment

Intentional teaching has an impact on children's school readiness.

VCPE Standards:

- 300.2.B.3.a.vii. Educational program administration
 - 1) The program, curriculum and learning environment reflect the school's mission, philosophy and pedagogical approach
 - 2) Instructional strategies including but not limited to teacher/student interaction and ratios, instructional/emotional support, selection of age-appropriate educational materials
- 300.3.A.2 Curriculum
 - a) Philosophy & framework
 - b) Approaches to learning, teaching strategies and lesson plans
 - c) Age-appropriate educational materials and content

Level 4 Required Improvement Activities

All VCPE approved accrediting associations must undergo a self study for the purpose of continuous improvement every 3-5 years. The associations must also require schools to undergo a self study at regular intervals determined by the approved accrediting agency and subject to review by VCPE.

VCPE Standards:

- 300.2.B.3.b. **Self-Study Report** – Description of requirements
- 300.2.B.3.c. **Process Procedures:**
 - i. Evidence of timely communication:
 - Peer communication prior to on-site visit;
 - Post-visit follow-up;
 - ii. Annual reporting and/or review documentation including report of educational programming and services.
 - iii. Visiting committee responsibilities;
 - iv. Training of visiting committee leaders and members;
 - v. Decision-making process for individual school accreditation;
 - vi. Evidence of a school follow-up report/improvement plan process;
 - vii. Appeals policy (*and process if applicable*)
- 300.2.B.4 The association provides the following:
 - a) Copy of school self-study report leading up to the school being reviewed
 - b) Copy of visiting committee report from the school being observed
 - c) Copy of a certificate of accreditation awarded by association

Level 5 Required Improvement Activities

QRIS is built specifically for maintaining quality using CLASS/ERS. VCPE is built on a self study system where improvement plans are customized for individual schools based on association standards.

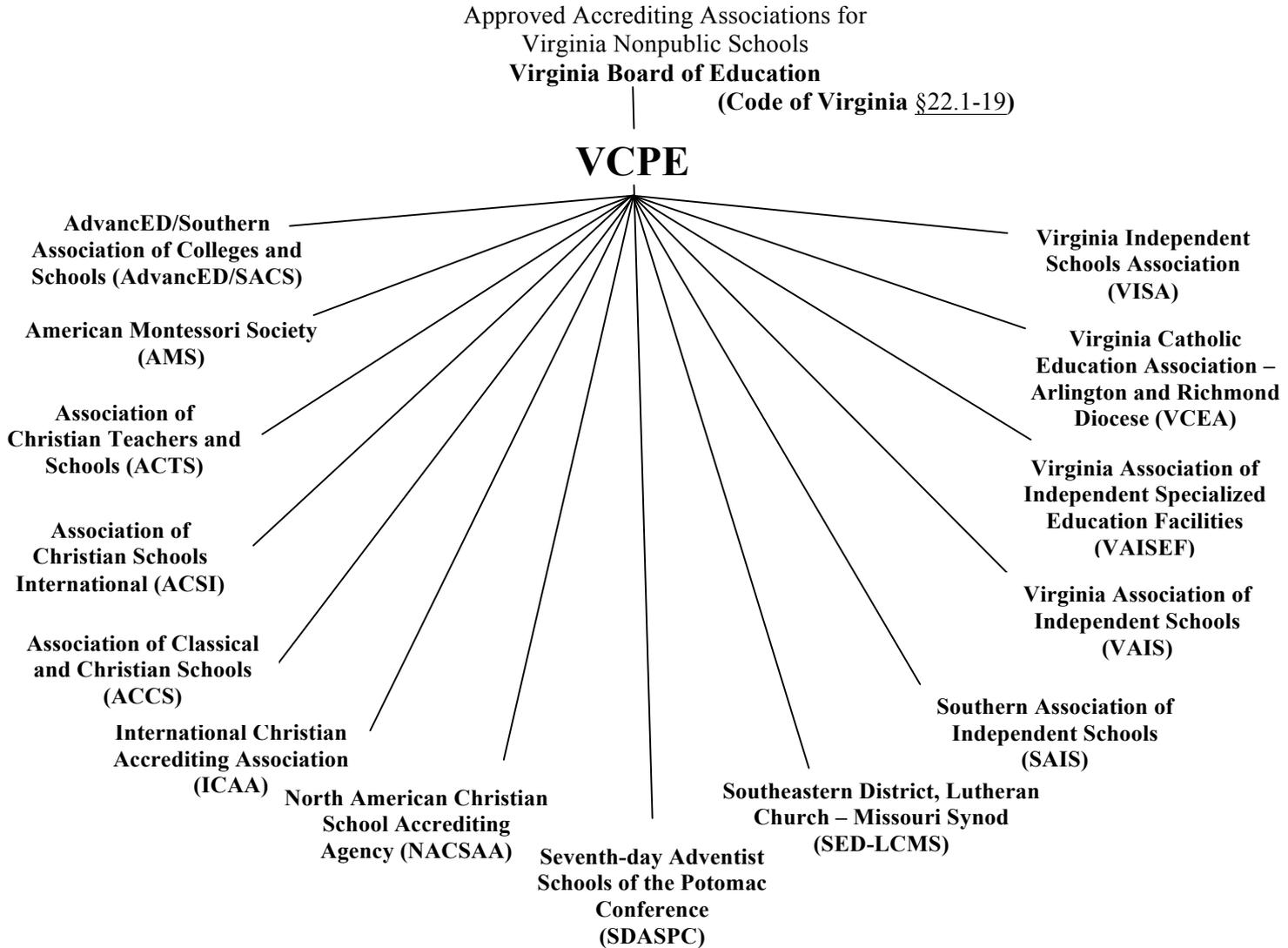


*§22.1-19: Virginia's Unique
Accountability System for
Private School Quality*

History

- 1974** – Founded as state affiliate of CAPE
- 1985** – VBOE transferred accreditation oversight on a two-year trial
- 1987** – VBOE full approval of VCPE accreditation process
- 1993** – VBOE reaffirmed relationship through a resolution
- 2000** – General Assembly passed §22.1-19, granting accreditation oversight of private nursery, preschool, elementary and secondary schools to VCPE as authorized by the Board of Education.

The VCPE Umbrella



VCPE at a Glance

- **Non-profit governed by a Board of Directors representing**
 - 14 approved accrediting associations; 2 applicants
 - 3 other school centered associations representing interest areas of state recognized accredited private schools
 - 2 directors-at-large
- **430 state recognized accredited schools and 22 candidates for accreditation**
 - 102,702 Enrolled Students
 - 283 or 63% offer PK
- **123 other schools with no accreditation oversight but subscribe to VCPE for informational purposes**
- **Additional question posed in 2015: Non-Profit or For Profit**
 - 307 or 430 schools reported; 79 % = non-profit

Accountability:

VCPE *PS-12 Peer Review System*

- **2015 Changes**
 - *Established a Standards Task Force for annual review of VCPE accountability process*
 - *Association Self Study added as a review component for Associations; Previously only schools were required to conduct a self study*
 - *Enhancements to Early Education component were developed with cross references to whole school standards.*

Accountability:

VCPE PS-12 Peer Review System

- **Association level accountability (Every 3-5 Years)**
 - *Review of Whole School Standards (required)*
 - *Virtual schools (optional)*
 - *Systems (optional)*
 - *Early Education (optional)*
 - *Association Self Study*
 - *Non-Profit and Non-Discriminatory*
 - *Evidence of Financial Viability*
 - *Evidence Based Standards*
 - *On-site observation at school site*

Accountability:

VCPE PS-12 Whole School Standards

- **School level accountability**
 - School Improvement Plan and Self Study
 - Published Mission and Philosophy/Pedagogical Approach
 - Description of Services Provided
 - Financial Integrity and Governance
 - Conformance with State and Federal Legal Requirements
 - Maintenance and Disposition of Student and Staff Records
 - Educational Program Administration
 - Teacher Qualifications and Professional Development
 - Relationships with Family and Community
 - Facilities
 - Emergency Management and Disaster Response Plans

VCPE VDOE as Partners: Collaboration

- **State §22.1-19:**
 - Transfer of Credit from private to public
 - Recognition of time served for teachers
 - Accountability through VCPE accreditation for nursery, preschool, elementary and secondary private schools
- **Federal Title programs:**
 - Equitable Services for teachers and students
 - Equitable Services Workgroup
 - Fall Forum Event

VCPE VDOE as Partners: Communication

- Sharing of Private School Database
- VCPE E-Newsletters
- Virginia Law and Private Schools
 - *Legal requirements*
 - *Shared resources and recommendations*
 - *Annual updates*



VIRGINIA COUNCIL FOR PRIVATE EDUCATION

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