

**October 5, 2015**

**Superintendent of Public Instruction Steven R. Staples  
on Revisions to the Standards of Accreditation**

**Do the revised accreditation standards lower expectations for schools?**

Staples: I think it is important for everyone to understand that the standards to meet full accreditation are exactly as they were previously — there have been no changes. The changes respond simply to the needs of schools that have fallen below full accreditation status and we are looking for a means to differentiate within that category. But full accreditation today is just as it was previously; the standards haven't been lowered a bit.

**Why did the Virginia Board of Education revise the standards?**

Staples: The idea of these new standards is to come up with a means to differentiate among the schools that are either close, or showing positive trends, versus those who are regressing or are nowhere near the benchmark. And I think the intent of the news system, the new ratings is to recognize that kind of progress and to be encouraging to those teachers to say you are on the right track, keep it up and you are going to make it.

**How will the new standards improve outcomes for students?**

Staples: I think the new ratings will allow the state to be more precise in giving support to schools because we will better be able to identify those schools that likely can make it doing what they are already doing and those schools that really, clearly need more direction or support from the state. So the new ratings will allow us to refine our interventions in a way where we really put our resources where they are most needed and we simply allow those that are doing the work, and clearly on a trajectory to get to the benchmark, to continue to do that.