

MINUTES
Virginia Board of Education
School and Division Accountability Committee
May 18, 2011
4:00 p.m.
Jefferson Conference Room, James Monroe Building

Mr. David L. Johnson, Chairman, convened the meeting with the following members present: Mrs. Sears, Dr. Cannaday, Dr. McLaughlin, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Krupicka, and Mrs. Beamer. Dr. Wright, superintendent of public instruction, was also present.

The first order of business was to hear a presentation from Dr. Kathleen Smith, director of school improvement, regarding a request from Fairfax County Public Schools and Albemarle County Public Schools. These divisions have proposed alternative accreditation plans to be reviewed by the committee. Representatives of these divisions were present. The committee heard the initial proposal, which is to be presented at the full Board of Education meeting the next day, Thursday, May 19.

The next order of business was a presentation and panel discussion regarding a request for waivers related to the testing schedule and the Standards of Learning Assessments. Mrs. Anne Wescott, assistant superintendent for policy and communications, presented this item. The request was submitted by the division superintendents in Henrico, Fairfax, Albemarle, Virginia Beach, and Roanoke County.

The following superintendents were present: Dr. Patrick Russo, Henrico County Public Schools; Dr. Jack Dale, Fairfax County Public Schools; and Dr. Pam Moran, Albemarle County Public Schools. In addition, the school board chair from Henrico County was present and spoke to the committee about the rationale for their request.

The superintendents outlined their request, as shown in the attachment.

Following the presentation, the chair opened the floor for questions. A lengthy question and answer session ensued.

The division superintendents acknowledged their gratitude to Dr. Wright for her assistance and advice to date. The superintendents indicated that they wished to continue the dialog with Dr. Wright as their plans develop. They also indicated that they would like to return to a future committee meeting for further discussion of their proposals.

Mr. Johnson thanks to superintendents for their presentation, and said that the committee welcomed further discussion.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

**REQUEST FOR WAIVERS RELATED TO THE STANDARDS OF LEARNING (SOL)
TESTING SCHEDULE AND ASSESSMENT**

**School Divisions: Albemarle County Public Schools, Fairfax County Public Schools,
Henrico County Public Schools, Roanoke County Public Schools, and
Virginia Beach City Public Schools**

Each of our school divisions is committed to preparing *all* of our students to graduate high school having mastered the skills necessary to succeed as 21st century learners, workers, and citizens. Our successful attainment of this goal is grounded in building our students' capacity with respect to the 21st century skills that are critical to their future success. These skills include, but are not limited to: critical and creative thinking, problem solving, collaboration, communication, social responsibility, and interdependence. Our educators are exploring different ways to teach and engage students in order to assist them in developing these skills. Our goal is to develop project-based learning units focused on 21st century skills starting at the elementary and middle school level.

The school divisions listed above request permission from the Virginia Board of Education to the administer Reading and Mathematics Standards of Learning (SOL) tests as early as the first semester in select schools. Students not passing the first administration will be given another opportunity to test during the regular spring administration. By allowing students the opportunity to demonstrate SOL proficiency earlier in the school year, our schools will have the opportunity to implement focused remediation where needed earlier; and our divisions will have the opportunity to increase our focus on the development of project-based learning units and the implementation of performance-driven assessments.

With the Board's approval of the requested waivers, our school divisions will take the lead in developing and field testing performance- and project-based learning units starting at the elementary and middle school level. The assessments associated with these units will be carefully designed performance tasks that will assess student mastery of the required Standards of Learning content as well as key 21st century skills that are linked to college and career readiness. We will develop rubrics and a scoring plan that meets the technical requirements established by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). It is our belief that data from these assessments will assist VDOE in developing similar assessments to be utilized across the state in the future.

In turn, our divisions will work with the VDOE to study the results of our field tests and report subsequent findings to the Virginia Board of Education in an effort to guide ongoing development of statewide assessments. Because our five divisions educate nearly 322,000 students - more than 25 percent of Virginia's public school enrollment - and represent the diverse geographic regions of the Commonwealth, we believe that these results will be instrumental in developing the next generation of assessments for Virginia. By working in partnership with the VDOE, we hope to take the lead in transforming how Virginia's schools educate, engage, and assess students across the Commonwealth. It is anticipated that our collaborative work will assist Virginia in maintaining its position as a leader in student assessment. '

Therefore, our divisions request the following waivers:

1. Request a waiver to allow SOL tests to be administered in elementary and middle schools during the fall *Non-Writing* test administration to students who will not complete classes until the spring semester according to the following implementation schedule.

Standards of Learning Tests	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Grades 3 through 5 <i>Reading</i>			ES*
Grades 3 through 5 <i>Mathematics</i>			ES
Grades 3 through 5 <i>Plain English Mathematics</i>			ES
Grade 6 <i>Reading</i>	MS*	MS	ES and MS
Grade 6 <i>Mathematics</i>		MS	ES and MS
Grade 6 <i>Plain English Mathematics</i>		MS	ES and MS
Grade 7 <i>Reading</i>	MS	MS	MS
Grade 7 <i>Mathematics</i>		MS	ES and MS
Grade 7 <i>Plain English Mathematics</i>		MS	ES and MS
Grade 8 <i>Reading</i>	MS	MS	MS
Grade 8 <i>Mathematics</i>		MS	ES and MS
Grade 8 <i>Plain English Mathematics</i>		MS	ES and MS
End-of-Course <i>Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II</i>		MS	ES and MS
End-of-Course <i>Algebra I Plain English</i>		MS	ES and MS

* ES =Elementary Schools; MS =Middle Schools

Background: Currently, the fall *Non- Writing* test administration is designed to accommodate only those students who will complete classes requiring the following SOL tests during the fall semester: Grades 6 and 7 *Reading, Mathematics, and Plain English Mathematics*; Grade 8 *Reading, Mathematics, Plain English Mathematics, and Science*; Content Specific History (*United States History to 1877, United States History: 1877 to the Present, and Civics & Economics*); and all End-of- Course tests.

2. Request a waiver to allow retesting during the next available spring test administration of students who fail grades 3 through 8 *Reading, Mathematics, and Plain English Mathematics* SOL tests in elementary and middle schools during a fall *Non- Writing* test administration.

Background: Currently, retests are not available for elementary and middle school students taking grades 3 through 8 *Reading, Mathematics, and Plain English Mathematics* SOL tests.

3. Request a waiver to allow the inclusion of passing scores from the fall administration of grades 3 through 8 *Reading, Mathematics, and Plain English Mathematics* SOL tests and retest scores from the subsequent spring test administration in Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) calculations.

Background: Currently, retests are not available for elementary and middle school students taking grades 3 through 8 *Reading, Mathematics, and Plain English Mathematics* SOL tests; and, therefore, AYP calculations for elementary and middle schools are based only on results from the spring *Non-Writing* test administration.