

**MINUTES**  
**Virginia Board of Education**  
**Committee on School and Division Accountability**  
**March 26, 2014**  
**1:00 P.M.**  
**Jefferson Conference Room, James Monroe Building**

**Welcome and Opening Comments**

The following Board of Education (Board) members were present for the March 26, 2014 Committee on School and Division Accountability meeting: Diane Atkinson, Dr. Oktay Baysal, Christian Braunlich, James Dillard, Darla Edwards, and Andrew Ko. Dr. Patricia Wright, the superintendent of public instruction, was also present.

Mrs. Atkinson, chairman of the committee, convened the meeting and welcomed the Board members and guests. She also welcomed the new Board member, Mr. Dillard, who is a former school teacher and principal and served in the Virginia General Assembly.

**Approval of Minutes from the February 26, 2014 Meeting**

A motion was made to approve the minutes for the February 26, 2014 meeting, the motion was seconded, and the minutes were approved by the committee members.

**Public Comment**

Mrs. Atkinson then opened the floor for public comment. Because there were no speakers, she moved on to the meeting agenda items.

**Agenda Items**

The following items were included on today's committee meeting agenda:

- Requests for Renewal of Alternative Accreditation Plans from Albemarle County Public Schools, Chesterfield County Public Schools, Danville City Public Schools, and Fairfax County Public Schools
- Request for Renewal of Alternative Accreditation Plans from Bland County Public Schools, Town of Colonial Beach Public Schools, Craig County Public Schools, Danville City Public Schools, Highland County Public Schools, Richmond City Public Schools, Scott County Public Schools, and York County Public Schools for High Schools with a Graduation Cohort of Fifty or Fewer Students
- Discussion of Waiver of Certain Accrediting Standards and Approval of an Innovative or Experimental Program from Norfolk City Public Schools
- Virginia's Application for a One-Year Extension of Waivers from Certain Requirements of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA)

## **Requests for Renewal of Alternative Accreditation Plans from Albemarle County Public Schools, Chesterfield County Public Schools, Danville City Public Schools, and Fairfax County Public Schools**

Dr. Kathleen Smith, director of the Office of School Improvement, presented the requests for renewal of alternative accreditation plans from Albemarle County Public Schools, Chesterfield County Public Schools, Danville City Public Schools, and Fairfax County Public Schools. These requests will be before the Board tomorrow for first review.

The initial requests were approved by the Board at various times in 2011, but the current requests have some minor changes as indicated in the [agenda item description](#). As provided in [8 VAC 20-131-280.C](#) of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (SOA), subject to the provisions of 8 VAC 20-131-350, the governing school board of special purpose schools such as those provided for in § 22.1-26 of the *Code of Virginia*, Governor's schools, special education schools, alternative schools, or career and technical schools that serve as the student's school of principal enrollment may seek approval of an alternative accreditation plan from the Board of Education. Special purpose schools with alternative accreditation plans shall be evaluated on the standards appropriate to the programs offered in the school based on the needs of the school and approved by the Board prior to August 1 of the school year for which the approval is requested. Dr. Smith said these requests would go into effect as part of the accreditation ratings in September 2014.

Dr. Smith reviewed each of the charts included in the [agenda item description](#) including the chart which showed the changes made in the proposed plans. She also discussed the thirteen criteria found on page 5. All of these school divisions have met these criteria for approval of alternative accreditation plans for these schools. When she asked if there were questions for the school division representatives, Board discussion followed. There was some discussion regarding provision of foreign languages at the alternative schools and discussion of the Chesterfield program, Chesterfield Community High School. Chesterfield has reorganized that school and is moving towards a college and career academy model.

See [Requests for Renewal of Alternative Accreditation Plans from Albemarle County Public Schools, Chesterfield County Public Schools, Danville City Public Schools, and Fairfax County Public Schools](#) for material supporting this agenda item.

## **Request for Renewal of Alternative Accreditation Plans from Bland County Public Schools, Town of Colonial Beach Public Schools, Craig County Public Schools, Danville City Public Schools, Highland County Public Schools, Richmond City Public Schools, Scott County Public Schools, and York County Public Schools for High Schools with a Graduation Cohort of Fifty or Fewer Students**

Dr. Kathleen Smith, director of the Office of School Improvement, presented this request for renewal of alternative accreditation plans from the above school divisions for high schools with a graduation cohort of fifty or fewer students. This request will be before the Board tomorrow for first review.

Again [8 VAC 20-131-280.C](#) of the SOA is referenced in the [agenda item description](#). Dr. Smith said this review is very similar to the first item except that it specifically addresses that part of the Code that addresses schools that have graduation classes with fifty or fewer students.

See [Request for Renewal of Alternative Accreditation Plans from Bland County Public Schools, Town of Colonial Beach Public Schools, Craig County Public Schools, Danville City Public Schools, Highland County Public Schools, Richmond City Public Schools, Scott County Public Schools, and York County Public Schools for High Schools with a Graduation Cohort of Fifty \(50\) or Fewer Students](#) for material supporting this agenda item.

### **Discussion of Waiver of Certain Accrediting Standards and Approval of an Innovative or Experimental Program from Norfolk City Public Schools**

Anne Wescott, assistant superintendent for policy and communications, introduced Dr. Samuel King, superintendent of Norfolk City Public Schools (NCPS), who provided the introduction for this presentation. Ms. Wescott explained that Norfolk was considering opening the Norfolk Open Campus Academy which is a program for high school students who are behind in their credits, at risk of dropping out, or actually have dropped out. The school division is looking at a pre-Labor Day waiver for an experimental or innovative school for a school that operates on a year-round basis. Ms. Atkinson noted that this item is not before the Board at tomorrow's meeting.

Dr. King brought Dr. Simmons and Dr. Sevigny, members of the school division staff, with him as well as Jim Dyke, who represented Edison, and the vice-chair of his school board, Dr. Brad Robinson. He said they are looking at the over-aged student at the middle school level, high school students who even with credit recovery would not be able to graduate in a timely manner without a customized approach, and those students who have dropped out. This program would reflect a partnership between NCPS, EdisonLearning, and the Magic Johnson Bridgescape Program to provide the services for these students. The main goal of the Magic Johnson Bridgescape Program is to bridge the gap between high school students and their high school diplomas in a flexible, blended e-learning environment. This innovative learning environment will be facilitated through the use of eCourses offered through EdisonLearning. Dr. King noted this is a program and not a school. This program will offer three blocks: a morning block, a mid-day block and an evening block. At this time NCPS is not always able to meet the needs of students with family and other responsibilities. This program would provide a non-traditional means to do so. Dr. King discussed the target population that will fall into this caseload. He said they proposed to start at a slow pace. Approximately 800 students qualify for the program, but they are proposing to start with between 200-250 students with slots for students in the three categories referenced above. They anticipate a waiting list. He asked members of the team who made visits to other programs to come forward. Dr. Simons said the state of Georgia has a statewide program. They noticed that the students they observed took ownership for their learning. Each child had an individualized graduation plan, and there were certified teachers/tutors on site. Norfolk also wants its students to have an opportunity for college credits so this school division will work with Norfolk State University, Old

Dominion University, Tidewater Community College, Virginia State University, and West Point Military Academy. There will be dual enrollment opportunities on site. In addition, the Virginia Ship Repair Association is a partner and the students will be able to earn certifications through that group with a possible opportunity for future employment. The presentation was followed by committee discussion. Issues discussed included communication with students, parents, and other stakeholders, day care for students with children and costs, the previous success rate of other related programs, tutoring sessions, the waiver request for a 5.5-hour day, highly qualified teachers, pupil-teacher ratio requirements, planning time for teachers, monitoring the program, and jobs for the students. Dr. Wright also made comments. She said she is still trying to determine whether Board approval is needed for this program. Dr. King also mentioned extra-curricular activities for these students. Many of them will not be eligible academically for these activities. However, they will have an opportunity to return to their home schools and participate in these activities if they meet their indicators and are on track for graduation.

See [Discussion of Waiver of Certain Accrediting Standards and Approval of an Innovative or Experimental Program from Norfolk City Public Schools](#) for material supporting this agenda item. See also related [presentation from Norfolk City Public Schools](#).

### **Report on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Waiver Renewal Process and Options for Amendments to Virginia's Renewal Application**

Veronica Tate, director of the Office of Program Administration and Accountability, presented this agenda item which will be before the Board for final review tomorrow.

At the February meetings, Ms. Tate reviewed some basic background information about ESEA flexibility, details of the flexibility extension process, and a proposed amendment to the methodology to establish annual measurable objective or AMO determinations. Since February, Virginia has received from the U.S. Department of Education a Part B monitoring report from the state's implementation of ESEA flexibility. That monitoring was conducted in September 2013, and the state must address items from that report as part of its extension package. Therefore, Principle 3 now has an amendment.

At this point, Ms. Tate asked Patty Pitts, assistant superintendent for teacher education and licensure, to join her so that she could respond to any questions. The report included a requirement for Virginia to clarify its data collection around teacher and principal evaluation systems and to describe more clearly the process the state plans to use to ensure that school divisions are implementing evaluation systems with fidelity. In response to this requirement in the report, the application for final review has two additional amendments to Principle 3; one relates to data collection and support for the lowest performing schools in the state and the other is for increased monitoring and support for evaluation system implementation. The state is already collecting information and certification from all school divisions for implementation of the Board's guidelines for uniform performance standards and evaluation criteria for teachers and principals. To respond to the requirements of the monitoring report, Virginia is

recommending to the Board to require all priority schools to submit the same detailed evaluation data as schools receiving school improvement grants.

The recommendations were distributed to all school divisions, Board watcher groups, and other interest groups for public comment. However, to date, there have been no comments from the field.

Dr. Wright said the department has been waiting for the official written report from the federal government for some time. Virginia fared very well as compared to other states.

See [Virginia's Application for a One-Year Extension of Waivers from Certain Requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 \(ESEA\)](#) for material supporting this agenda item.

**Request for Renewal of Alternative Accreditation Plans from Bland County Public Schools, Town of Colonial Beach Public Schools, Craig County Public Schools, Danville City Public Schools, Highland County Public Schools, Richmond City Public Schools, Scott County Public Schools, and York County Public Schools for High Schools with a Graduation Cohort of Fifty or Fewer Students - Continued**

At the end of the previous presentation Dr. Smith introduced a representative from York County, and he responded to a question from the committee. Mr. Dillard had a question regarding York River Academy and its location. The school representative responded to the question and described the charter school.

**Closed Session for Legal Counsel**

President Braunlich moved that, pursuant to Virginia Code § [2.2-3711](#), the committee convene in a closed meeting for the purposes of consultation with legal counsel regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice as detailed in [Executive Order Two - Personnel Directive Prohibiting the Receipt of Certain Gifts](#), the Freedom of Information Act, Open Meetings laws and email and conflict of interests laws, and that Noelle Shaw Bell and/or Wendell Roberts, legal counsel to the Virginia Department of Education, as well as staff members Dr. Patricia Wright, James Barr, Richard Schley, and Anne Wescott whose presence will aid in the Board's consideration of this matter participate in the closed meeting. A motion was made, seconded, and approved by the committee members.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 4:14 p.m.