

**MINUTES**  
**Virginia Board of Education**  
**Committee on School and Division Accountability**  
**Wednesday, April 27, 2016**  
**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 April 27, 2016 Committee on School and Division Accountability meeting: Diane Atkinson; Dr. Billy Cannaday, Jr.; James Dillard; Daniel A. Gecker; Elizabeth Lodal; Sal Romero, Jr.; Joan Wodiska; and Wesley J. Bellamy, introduced as a new Board member. Dr. Steven Staples, the superintendent of public instruction, was present. Dr. Oktay Baysal was absent.

Ms. Atkinson, chairman of this committee, convened the meeting and welcomed the Board members and guests. As part of her introductory remarks, she said today's meeting would focus primarily on graduation requirements and on the profile of a graduate. The meeting would start with presentations regarding the High School Innovation Grants from five of the grantees. Then there would be a discussion of the profile of a graduate from the perspective of higher education admission and from the perspective of higher education student success.

**Approval of Minutes from the March 16, 2016 Meeting**

Mrs. Atkinson said the draft minutes from the March 16, 2016 meeting were posted on-line and provided to Board members. The minutes were approved by consensus.

**Public Comment**

Ms. Atkinson indicated that no one had signed up to provide public comment, but she asked if there was anyone present who wished to do so. However, when no one in the audience responded, Ms. Atkinson then continued to the next agenda item.

**High School Innovation Grants**

Fairfax County Public Schools – Global STEM Challenges Program  
Richmond Regional School for Innovation - CodeRVA  
Newport News City Public Schools – Re-imagining High School: Student-Centered College-, Career-, and Citizen-Ready Micro Academies  
Salem City Public Schools – Personalized Learning: Connecting Students to their Future  
Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools – High School by Design at Warhill

Ms. Atkinson introduced the presenters for this agenda item and each presenter provided an overview of his or her program.

- Scott Settar, technology & engineering education and STEAM integration manager for Fairfax County Public Schools. Mr. Settar provided an overview of the Global Stem Challenges Program for the Board members and explained that it is a STEM-focused, interdisciplinary three-year program concentrating on global problems and integrating the challenges of engineering. The program is based at Edison High School in Fairfax County Public Schools and has developed an interdisciplinary, project-based curriculum which integrates honors level mathematics, science, and engineering courses. He also discussed the barriers to success and raised concerns regarding Virginia Department of Education waivers. Support has been provided by the National Academy of Engineering and local school leadership. They hope to begin the first year of the program in September 2016.
- Dr. Yvonne W. Brandon – executive planning director for the Richmond Regional School for Innovation - CodeRVA. Dr. Brandon provided an overview of this program. She said the school is designed and built upon three pillars: high school reform, equity, and the gaps in employment. She said the expectation is that all students will complete all high school credits during their 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade school-years. In the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades, students will remain at the high school, but will secure work experiences through a private company, MaxxPotential. In addition, J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College and John Tyler Community College have offered an entire two-year degree program to the school's students on-line. All students will graduate with a two-year degree and extensive work experience. The school is considering a pre-Labor Day waiver request and other waivers. Students will begin the program in the 2016-2017 school-year. She also discussed barriers, such as funding and time, as well as the innovation learning curve.
- Dr. Ashby Kilgore – superintendent for Newport News Public Schools (NNPS). She said the NNPS mission is readiness for college, career, and citizenship. Dr. Kilgore provided an overview of Heritage High School and its enrollment. The school is composed of several programs, including a Governor's STEM Academy, a university magnet program, and a career academy. The plan is to focus on smaller career academies matched to the local job market. The academies would combine academics, community connection, and learning. In addition, there would be summer classes each summer for the students. In the senior year, the students will participate in an early college program or an early career program. The program will be implemented for the 2016-2017 school-year.
- Scott Habeeb – principal of Salem High School; Salem City Public Schools. Mr. Habeeb said they are trying to personalize education at Salem High School. They recognized that the traditional education model does not allow for enough personalization of content and experiences to prepare students for the world beyond high school. They had started to look at these issues even before the grant was announced. They had completed some site visits to schools in other

states (California, North Carolina, and Ohio), but the grant gave them an opportunity to look deeply at these issues. They continued site visits in Kentucky and Pennsylvania during the 2015-2016 school-year and also looked at career pathways and what sort of experiences and courses students need in order to get there. They have also reached out to industry in the community to build relationships. Next year counselling will be done based on career pathways. More credits will be earned in middle school. In addition, on-line courses will be offered for courses they do not currently offer. Salem is a small division so there is a history of shared leadership and innovation. A barrier to innovation has been institutional inertia. However, they are ready to implement because they are controlling the pace. As to assistance needed, they are asking that the Standards of Quality be fully funded even though they understand that the Board has no decision-making authority there. In addition, they are asking for highly flexible Standards of Learning (SOL) testing windows, flexibility in teacher licensure, increased ability to provide locally created courses for credit, and alternative assessments for SOL verification, local control of school calendars, increased availability of and access to quality on-line curriculum, and flexibility with regard to maximum teaching periods, make-up of snow days/seat-time, planning time, insurance coverage for students involved in workplace learning, and teacher-student ratios. He said fewer credits should be required and fewer standards so that teachers can explore deeper into the curriculum as opposed to adding more and more requirements for the teachers and students.

- Dr. Jeffrey Carroll, principal of Warhill High School in Williamsburg-James City County – High School by Design. Dr. Carroll provided an overview of this program which is no longer referred to as High School by Design. The program is now called The Pathways Project at Warhill. It will be launched this fall with 100 rising freshman and will be centered around four key concepts or guideposts: design thinking, project-based learning, personalized learning in a blended environment, and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. The goal is to make the high school experience personal, meaningful, and relevant for the students. They are in a partnership with William and Mary and have developed professional development workshops which will continue throughout the summer. Moreover, they have met with the Peninsula Workforce Development Council, and members of the school faculty have visited business and industries to see what they need from school graduates. They have also conducted site visits at similar programs elsewhere. The long-term vision is to become similar to a lab school. Possible barriers are current and proposed graduation requirements (for example, why are four years of some core academic subjects required when they are not relevant to the student's career pathway and the student has been able to demonstrate competency in the area), lack of available career cluster related course work, requirements for subject-certified teachers with on-line courses, and a perception that change means we are doing something wrong.

Board members raised the following questions and comments:

- How are students being prepared for civic life post-graduation? Two panelists said this is addressed in their programs in some manner.
- How much will the students participating in CodeRVA be paid and how will students be recruited? Dr. Branden said the wage will begin at \$10.25 and may move up to \$25 an hour with MaxxPotential. In addition, CodeVA is training teachers in order to provide computer science even in the early grades.
- Dr. Kilgore said summer has become very, very different in Newport News. Last year, summer programs were offered to 2,000 students in the neighborhood Heritage serves and this will expand to 6,000 students. In Newport News, they are trying to imprint the idea that you go to school in the summer.
- A Board member commended the panelists on the work they are doing and encouraged them to continue to raise issues around waivers and teacher licensure credentials.
- Another Board member also commended the panelists on the work they are doing and asked how the Board can support their work. She said she sees the role of the Board to support them and to remove barriers and hurdles. She said she thinks it will be important for the Board to have a formalized process to gather information from them and then to report it. She then went on to say that, hopefully, the state staff can capture what they are experiencing in terms of hurdles, big and small. She also asked if they had informally created their own professional learning community and asked how they are informally sharing information. Dr. Kilgore said the involved school superintendents have met at regional and state meetings. Dr. Branden also thanked Dr. Staples, Dr. Haun, and Dr. Cave for the assistance they have provided. She also noted that at the VASS conference to be held in a few days there will be a panel of the innovative grant recipients who will share information with other conference participants.
- Are there specific criteria for participating students, such as newcomers? Dr. Branden said they are looking for students who are interested in the program, but they have also considered how they will assist those students who need additional support services. Dr. Kilgore said they are trying to create a model that can be used at other high schools. Students will select themselves for these programs.
- A Board member mentioned “accelerating acquisition of credits.” At the middle school level, how do they plan to do that with a student who is struggling? One panelist said this will not be a change for them. Some students are already taking accelerated courses in middle school. Dr. Branden said there are high school courses in the middle school so they are willing to use the trimester and other options. Another panelist said they are looking at on-line courses as a means to resolve this issue.

- What do they see as their success measures? Dr. Kilgore said the work will reinforce SOL-, college- and career-readiness. Mr. Habeeb said they are doing quite well, but they are looking to an increase in industry certifications, more students with work-place based learning opportunities, the number of Capstone projects completed, and the data they receive from parents and students when they ask questions about their engagement in school and adequate preparation. Dr. Branden agreed with his assessment. She said students will leave CodeRVA with a high school diploma, an industry certification, and an associate degree, or they will be well on their way to gaining that degree.

Board members thanked the panelists for the information provided.

During the discussion, Ms. Atkinson introduced Holly Coy, deputy secretary of education, who was present for this meeting.

### **Discussion of “Profile of a Graduate” from the Perspective of Higher Education Admissions**

Panelists:

Dr. Karen Campbell, Associate Vice President for Recruitment, Admissions, and Enrollment, Tidewater Community College

Dr. Karen Pettis-Walden, Director of Admission and Records at Reynolds Community College

Dr. Luke Schultheis, Vice Provost for Strategic Enrollment Management, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU)

Tim Wolfe, Associate Provost for Enrollment and Dean of Admissions, the College of William and Mary

Ms. Atkinson introduced the presenters for this agenda item.

The panelists raised common themes in the discussion regarding higher education admissions:

- Dr. Campbell said they look for college-readiness and persistence. There is a significant number of students who do not place in college English and mathematics when they enroll. However, students are successful because they chose to persist and should be able to demonstrate skills of self-management (self-regulate their own learning) when they enter college.
- Dr. Pettis-Walden discussed how the “Profile of a Graduate” would help the community colleges. They are beginning to examine student readiness and are finding problems with the mathematics courses because the majority of the students do not place into college-level mathematics courses. They are seeing a lack of academic preparation, particularly in the mathematics area, and a lack of career-path preparation. They are also seeing students who come from a non-traditional education path and are finding that these students may not be

prepared academically. Thus, they are trying to determine how to assist those students.

- Dr. Schultheis said he agreed that there is a problem with mathematics. The most repeated course at VCU is pre-calculus. This may delay students' graduations. Some students change their majors in order to avoid these issues. Grit is now being measured at VCU and at other institutions. Some institutions are focusing on this in the admissions process. The undecided students take much longer to graduate and may not graduate at all. They would suggest caution on taking too many college credits in high school.
- Mr. Wolfe said the other panelists have touched on key issues. However, when he thought about what is looked for in admission, he considered the following: mastery of academic content; ability to think critically, to analyze, to think independently and ask questions; interest in research; an open mind; an appreciation of history and cultures; an ability to be a contributing member of a group; an ability to recognize what we can learn from those who are different from us; an ability to navigate differences of opinion in a positive way and a respectful manner; a willingness to be a self-advocate; a desire to achieve goals while having a willingness to serve others; and a willingness to step out of a comfort zone. The focus seems to be on the career-ready individual, but he said he might challenge that and say the focus should be on the life-ready individual. Career-ready is a part of that, but students should be prepared to be educated citizens and prepared to consider multiple careers.

In response to the presentation, the Board members raised the following issues:

- A Board member said we still need to keep in mind that these students are still young and not adults. He fears that sometimes too much may be asked before the students are ready. He also asked Dr. Campbell how they interact with the local schools. She said they interact with the local school divisions in different ways, including the use of career coaches in the high schools, dual enrollment, and other programs. He also asked Dr. Pettis-Walden what she would request of high school leaders to address the large number of students who eventually charge their programs before completion. She said more career preparation is needed.
- A Board member said he can testify that when he entered community college, he was not ready for college-ready courses. However, he had that grit so he continued down that path.

Ms. Atkinson thanked each of the panelists for his or her presentations.

### **Discussion of "Profile of a Graduate" from the Perspective of Higher Education Student Success**

Panelists:

Dr. Tim O'Donnell, Associate Provost for Academic Engagement and Student Success (and professor of communication), University of Mary Washington

Dr. Raymond Burton, Dean of Math, Science, and Engineering, Reynolds Community College

Dr. Jill Sible, Professor of Biological Sciences and Assistant Provost for Undergraduate Education, Virginia Tech

Ms. Atkinson introduced this agenda item by stating that the focus would be on success once the student is enrolled in the institution of higher education. The panelists provided the following information:

- Dr. O'Donnell said he is presently tasked with several projects aimed at student success. Student success is about transitioning from high school to college, navigating this new environment by building relationships and participating in deep learning experiences and then transitioning out with clarity prepared to thrive with different career transitions that students will face in a complex and ever-changing world. Some knowledge is critically important, but academic content matters less than we think it does. It is less about the content delivered in the classroom and more about the environment and experiences that we create to support student learning. Moreover, a better indicator of a student's probability of success in college would include those things discussed by the previous panel: a willingness to take risks and cope with uncertainty, resilience in the face of failure, determination when obstacles are in his or her way, a passion for learning, and the ability to take control and manage his or her life. These qualities are a far better indicator of success in college than some of the usual predictive measures. What matters in college is not where you go, but how you go. To the extent that the profile creates opportunities for students beginning in middle school to forge relationships and take advantages of rich experiences involving deep learning, this promises to move the commonwealth forward in preparing career-ready graduates.
- Dr. Sible said as she read the materials that were shared, she was struck with the sense of alignment with the work the Board is doing and a lot of the planning and visioning being done at Virginia Tech. This year she had the honor of co-chairing a committee called "Preparing Students for the World in Which They will Live and Work," which is a part of Virginia Tech's thirty-year visioning process. They were charged with trying to predict the future and then envision what a Virginia Tech education could and should be to prepare a strong workforce and citizenry for the future. The aspect about the future about which they were most certain is uncertainty in that they were preparing students for jobs that do not exist today and for a world they could scarcely imagine. They are calling the vision they came up with the VT-Shaped Student. These are students who acquire a depth of knowledge in a particular discipline, but they also acquire interdisciplinary capability. The T-Shaped Student emerges in theory from a liberal education, but recognizes that a workforce-ready individual and a leader in society does not just emerge from four-years of coursework. They believe that these individuals must engage in purpose-driven learning. The Virginia diploma

has great appeal in that a common degree would seem to leave open an opportunity for a college-track for more students longer, especially if everyone is working together to work with those students who might need additional support. She said Virginia Tech offers a summer bridge program for incoming freshmen to refresh applied math skill in a research context. In this program they are doing algebra and arithmetic skills. Although the students have learned these skills, they do not always know how to apply them when it comes to the foundation science classes. Much of what is done in the summer bridge program could actually be done much better by high school teachers over the course of a semester or a year. This might be a great use of the fourth year of core subjects, rather than choosing another science or math which is unrelated to that prior learning. She urged the Board to consider portfolio as a type of assessment for all subjects, including the STEM fields.

- Dr. Burton said he grew up in Richmond and became a biologist. He attended the Mathematics and Science Innovation Center. This led him to where he is now. Having been exposed to new ideas, experiences, and innovation in science, mathematics, and STEM, the opportunity for any career he could think of was there. Before he became a Dean, he taught for approximately 15 years. As a Dean, he looks at students when they walk in the door and whether they can have a conversation with him about what they want to do with their lives. They have noted that students who have at least mathematics or any of the higher level courses do well and tend to have lower levels of need for remediation. One of the main issues they tend to run into is the need for remediation in math, English, or other related areas. This impacts the required time for graduation and impacts financial aid and readiness for employability. The frustration comes when students have taken the Standards of Learning tests, but when they take the community college placement test, they find they need remediation. Retention numbers are low as related to these students. He likes the idea that four years of math will be required, but soft skills are also important. Without the ability to communicate properly, the students may not be ready for employment yet. Self-advocacy and accountability are also important so that they will recognize what level of preparation they will need in the classroom. In addition, it is important to maintain integration across disciplinary content to prepare students for high level critical thinking, reading, writing, and presentations because these things cross all boundaries of employability.

### **Concluding Remarks and Adjournment**

Ms. Atkinson thanked the participants for their presentations since this information will be very helpful for the May retreat.

The meeting adjourned at 3:29.