

MINUTES
Virginia Board of Education
Standards of Quality Committee
October 24, 2006

James Monroe Building
Jefferson Meeting Room, 22nd Floor
Richmond, Virginia
10:30-12:00

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m. by Dr. Gary Jones, chair. The following Board of Education members were present: Dr. Emblidge, Dr. Ward, Mrs. Castro, Mrs. Saslaw, Mr. Johnson and Dr. Brewster. Dr. Billy K. Cannaday, Jr., superintendent of public instruction, was also present to assist the committee in its work.

Ms. Anne Wescott, assistant superintendent for policy and communications, presented an overview of the public comment process, including the 10 public hearings held by the board in September. She reported that the board heard from 123 speakers during the hearings. The most frequent recommendations made by the speakers were for:

- One reading specialist for every 1,000 students.
- Additional librarians: In elementary schools, an additional full-time librarian for every 500 students over 300; in middle and secondary schools, an additional full-time librarian for every 500 students over 1,000.
- Clerical support for librarians: One full-time clerk at 350 students, and an additional clerk for every additional 600 students.
- One full-time mathematics teacher specialist for each school.
- One testing coordinator for each school.
- A minimum of ten current print material titles per student in each school library, with copyrights averaging within the last ten years.

Ms. Wescott provided the Board with a notebook of all of the written comments that were received, a briefing paper containing caseload information regarding speech language pathologists, a briefing paper containing information regarding reading specialists, and a survey of SOQ priorities that had been compiled from a meeting with the Virginia Association of School Superintendents.

Board members raised several questions regarding these materials, especially the survey and figures regarding speech language pathologists. Board members then discussed SOQ funding, math specialists, and instructional technology positions. Board members also considered the possibility of making the additional requested positions for assistant principals responsible for testing coordination. Dr. Jones raised the issue of including school safety in the SOQ, as well.

Ms. Wescott then explained the changes to the Standards of Quality that are being proposed for the Board's consideration this year. These changes include the four staffing positions that were passed by the General Assembly, but not funded:

1. Require one full-time principal in each elementary school.

The SOQ currently requires a half-time principal for elementary schools with fewer than 300 students.

2. Require one full-time assistant principal for each 400 students in each school.

The SOQ currently requires one half-time assistant principal at an elementary school with between 600 and 899 students and one full-time assistant principal at an elementary school with 900 or more students. No assistant principal is provided through the SOQ in elementary schools with enrollments of fewer than 600 students. The current middle and secondary assistant principal standard in the SOQ is for one full-time assistant principal per 600 students in a school.

3. Require one full-time instructional position for each 1,000 students to serve as the reading specialist.

The Standards of Quality allow, but do not require, one full-time reading specialist in each elementary school, at the discretion of the local school board.

4. Reduce the state required speech language pathologist caseload from 68 to 60 students.

Currently, the caseload for speech-language pathologists is mandated by the Board's *Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia*, 8 VAC 20-80-45, at 68 students.

The following options were also presented for the Board's consideration:

Standard 1: Instructional programs supporting the Standards of Learning and other educational objectives

- Clarify that the program of instruction offered by local school divisions includes the knowledge and skills needed for gainful employment to prepare students to achieve economic self-sufficiency.
- Add a requirement that the programs of prevention, intervention, and remediation offered by the school division include components with a demonstrated record of effectiveness.
- Clarify that remediation is required if a student fails to achieve a passing score on all Standards of Learning tests in the grade, or who fails an end-of-course Standards of Learning test required for the award of a verified credit.

Remediation may be required if the student fails to achieve a passing score on one or more, but not all, Standards of Learning tests in grades three through eight.

- Add a requirement for the early identification, diagnosis, and assistance for students with problems with mathematics, and provision of instructional strategies and practices that benefit the development of mathematics skills for all students.

Standard 2. Instructional, administrative, and support personnel.

- Require local school boards to employ one mathematics teacher specialist per 1,000 students in grades kindergarten through eight.
- Require local school boards to employ one data analyst/assessment coordinator per 1,000 students.
- Require local school boards to maintain pupil-teacher ratios for students who are blind or vision-impaired at not less than the following levels: Level I, resource teacher, 24 to one; Level II, self-contained with an aide, 10 to one; self-contained without an aide, eight to one, or Level II, self-contained student weight of 2.5. (Item 128.C of Chapter 3, 2006 Acts of Assembly, states, “The Board of Education shall consider the inclusion of instructional positions needed for blind and vision impaired students enrolled in public schools and shall consider developing a caseload requirement for those instructional positions as part of its review of the Standards of Quality....”)

Standard 3. Accreditation, other standards and evaluation

- Add language specifying that the cumulative eighth grade history and social science Standards of Learning test will be eliminated after the 2007-2008 school year. Instead, all school divisions must administer the United States History to 1877, United States History: 1877 to the Present, and Civics and Economics Standards of Learning tests.
- Clarify that the School Performance Report Card must include Standards of Learning test results disaggregated by student subgroups.

Standard 4. Student achievement and graduation requirements

- Clarify that provisions be made to facilitate the transfer and appropriate grade placement of students from other public secondary schools, from nonpublic schools, and from home instruction.
- Require that school divisions notify parents of secondary students of not just the number of standard and verified credits needed for graduation, but also the subject area requirements.

Standard 5. Teacher quality and educational leadership

- Add a requirement that the local school board provide teachers and principals with professional development programs in effective classroom management.

Standard 6. Planning and public involvement

- Clarify that the strategies for improving student achievement in the Board of Education's comprehensive plan, as well as the local school board's comprehensive plan, focus attention on the achievement of educationally at-risk students.

Standard 7. School board policies

- Clarify that the current school division policies made available to the public include the Student Conduct Policy.
- Require that the school division policies be posted on the school division's Web site, in addition to hard copies being made available to the public.

The committee will meet again on November 28, 2006 to consider the revisions that have been recommended. In preparation for that meeting, Department of Education staff will make any revisions as suggested by Board members and send them to them for their review.