

**Minutes of the
Virtual Learning Advisory Committee Meeting
Tuesday, October 13, 2015**

Virtual Learning Advisory Committee (VLAC) Members Participating:

Dr. David Rankin (Dr. Marcus Newsome), Chesterfield County Public Schools (Region 1)
Mr. James Maxlow (Dr. Ashby Kilgore), Newport News City Public Schools, (Region 2)
Dr. Linda Reviea, Superintendent, Staunton City Public Schools
Mr. George Washington (Dr. Mark Church), Franklin County Public Schools (Region 6)
Ms. Roxanna Thompson (Dr. Thomas Brewster), Pulaski County Public Schools (Region 7)
Mr. Peter Sengenberger (Gina Patterson), Virginia School Boards Association
Mr. Brian Callahan (Bert Schmidt), WHRO Public TV
Ms. Cheri Kelleher, Virtual Virginia
Ms. Gail Warren, Virtual Virginia

Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Staff Members Participating:

Dr. Billy Haun, Chief Academic Officer/Assistant Superintendent of Instruction
Mark Saunders, Director, Technology and Virtual Learning
Jean Weller, Education Technology Specialist
Rebecca Hawthorne, Virtual Learning Coordinator

Others in Attendance:

Dr. Jennifer Piver-Renna, Senior Executive Director for Research, Virginia Department for Education
Gaurav Fouzday, Intern, Virginia Commonwealth University
Kimberly Garrett
Roger Grae
Allison Lawrence Jones
Joel Andres
Public Members (3)

(1) Welcome and Introductions

Dr. Haun welcomed members, staff, and others to the meeting of the Virtual Learning Advisory Committee (VLAC) at 9:00 a.m. Dr. Haun noted that topics talked about during the spring meeting are currently being incorporated and meeting twice a year should help with keeping the committee updated. Everyone introduced themselves.

(2) Update on current initiatives or issues

a. Virginia Virtual School Board

Susan B. Williams, Virginia Department of Education, presented.

Ms. Williams discussed House Bill 324 (HB 324) that will take effect on July 1, 2016. This bill creates an actual school board within the Executive agency. For each child, the average state share will follow them including funding for IEPs.

A question was asked about if a student decides to change programs. The bill does not directly answer this, but the process to change may be the same as if they transferred to a different school division.

A question was asked regarding who will pay home-schooled children's bill. The child will enroll directly with the virtual school and the state funds will follow the child; the local share will not. A question was asked about who will provide services to special education students. The virtual school will be receiving funding for the special education students and the contractors hired will provide the services, not the local school division.

The following questions were raised to be answered at another date:

What is the designation for a full-time program? Which level(s) will be included and types of diplomas available?

It was noted that there are still additional questions in need of answers and that the bill has not passed yet.

b. Algebra I Outreach program pilot

Cheri Kelleher, Virtual Virginia, presented.

The goal of the Algebra I Outreach program pilot is to provide support to local school divisions that lack qualified Algebra teachers. The pilot program has interactive online lessons via Blackboard Collaborate at a classroom level. There will be seven lessons given on a two-day cycle. Each lesson is 45 minutes to an hour long and will have classwork and homework. The pilot will connect classrooms across Virginia and ensure they are taught by a licensed teacher; the teacher in the classroom will remain the teacher of record. There will be office hours, activities, and support development. The lessons will also be recorded and provided to non-participant schools if they desire them (via eMedia). There will only be ten classes per session.

The lessons are two-way and can be used with a camera, white board, and projector; speakers and microphones are also needed. A test of the connections and equipment that will be used in the schools will be conducted after participant school list is provided to Virtual Virginia. It was noted that WHRO Public TV has developed and is currently recording videos on Algebra I. This is an additional resource teachers can use via eMedia and will most likely be linked on Virtual Virginia. The video series should be completed by the end of this calendar year.

The goal is to have all participant teachers and schools trained and ready for the pilot by November 4, 2015. If a school division wants to participate, they must apply by October 23. Although a pilot, the program may expand depending on the response from the school divisions. An assessment(s) will be done at the local school level that will use various ways to compare and assess how this program works. A few questions were asked as queries to think about regarding assessment. How is it being use? Who is using it? Is technology in the way? How did the students perform?

Another question was asked about how the design of instruction aligns with this pilot. More information will be revealed as VCU interns work on collecting the data.

It was noted that with public and private funding, eMedia is a free tool that any teacher can access and use. Please broadcast this resource.

c. Virtual Virginia full-time program pilot

Cheri Kelleher, Virtual Virginia, presented.

Although Virtual Virginia was initially designed to be supplemental, the decision was made to offer a full-time program. There is not a lot of data available right now because the program began this semester. In order to be in the program, a student had to apply through their local school division. This pilot provides 62 licensed teachers who all received training. The student to teacher ratio is 109:1.

Only 41 divisions are participating with a small pool of students. The low numbers are due to the pilot not offering a combination of courses the students wanted to take.

There are some issues. Many students wanted to take more specialized courses. Of the students who enrolled, 20 percent left the program before it began. It was noted that this drop in students mirrors face-to-face and virtual school programs at the local level.

A question was asked about a program to outreach and support local guidance counselors. This pilot is offering mentor training, counselor training and updates counselors every week on the progress of their students. Counselors are vigilant about the students' progress and Virtual Virginia reaches out to the schools on a one-to-one basis. It was noted that expectations with this type of program may be said and known to participants, but there could be a breakdown in whether they received it correctly.

With the pilot, they make sure everything aligns with the SOLs and that everything is evaluated. It was noted that there is a need to get the message out about how to or who would be a best fit for the program. There are various challenges to that message as "best fit" is very subjective.

A question asked about the effect a student dropping to four (virtual) classes will have on funding and enrollment. Follow up questions were: Do the students count as part of the local school division? What are the definitions of part-time and full-time?

It was noted that there should/could be possible policy changes.

d. JLARC Report on Efficiency and Effectiveness of K-12 Spending

Mark Saunders, Virginia Department of Education, presented.

The JLARC study has six chapters. Chapters 1-5 deal with K-12 in general and transportation costs. Chapter six is specifically about online instruction. There were nine recommendations altogether and three are for online learning (numbers 7-9). It was noted that the presentation was about the report's findings and not on online learning.

The JLARC report covered six different areas regarding online learning. The report noted the potential for online learning and could possibly improve efficiency by reducing costs. Online learning could improve the effectiveness because of the broad array of educational opportunities and courses offered; the higher quality of the teacher that teaches online courses and the richer course content. The JLARC report notes the variety of courses offered through Virtual Virginia and

Approved Multidivisional Online Providers; the communication methods between teachers and students; use of LMS; and stressed the use of local site mentors, or coaches. The mentors were utilized more in the lower levels and less use of the LMS because there was potential for more offline lessons facilitated with the virtual teachers and the learning coach served as liaison between the students, the virtual teacher, and the activities. This switched once in the higher levels because the students have more independence and relied more on LMS.

Most of the students are enrolled in supplemental online programs rather than the full-time programs.

The JLARC report noted the agreement with the Multidivisional Online Providers and the free access to Virtual Virginia for all students in the state of Virginia.

The number of online students is small compared to the overall K-12 population. Three percent of an LEA's students were enrolled in one course. When usage percentage is compared to other states, it is found to be comparable (2014-2015 school year). And, Virginia is among the top ten states enrolling high school students in a state operated online program.

The report indicated there are fewer students enrolled in online programs full-time; however, there are two initiatives seeking to expand access to fully online learning programs. The first is the Virtual Virginia fully online high school pilot and the second is House Bill 324.

Online learning programs increase educational opportunities, but effectiveness varies. Although online learning programs help to reduce scheduling conflicts, aid in remedial or credit recovery for student struggling academically, and are feasible for students unable to attend physical schools, there is insufficient research to determine if online learning is more or less effective than physical schools. Moreover, the cost of online programs should be less than the cost of physical schools.

The JLARC report recommends:

7. Collaborate with the Board and/or staff for any statewide fully online school created in Virginia to develop (or obtain) and distribute informational materials that help families and guidance counselors to make informed decisions about enrolling children in fully online schools.
8. Develop a methodology for estimating the cost of fully online learning programs.
9. Annually compare the achievement of students enrolled in Virtual Virginia courses to students of the same characteristics in physical schools, and report these findings to the Board of Education annually.

Open discussion about the report.

A question was asked about the waiting list for Virtual Virginia. The list had 1,900 students at the first of September and currently there are 400 for the spring block. However, there are issues accurately counting those on the waiting list because of how enrollment is currently done. The main issue happens when Virtual Virginia cannot commit to serving the school divisions in August, then the school division has to make a decision(s) on how to serve their student(s). Timing plays a role. It was noted that recommendation nine, Virtual Virginia should post AP scores, does not reveal all the information given to JLARC. The information given to JLARC included the AP scores. In

addition, the scores are located on the Virtual Virginia Web site and are compared to the state and national averages.

A question was asked regarding students in local divisions taking online courses and if there is a policy regarding face-to-face attendance.

Pulaski County students take Virtual Virginia courses in their schools and are taken within their blocks.

Dr. Linda Reviea noted that this is a cultural issue and different divisions approach this in different ways. In Staunton City, a place is provided for students to do the online program, but they are not required to use it. This changes if the administration notices that students are failing to log in or do their work in a timely manner.

Dr. Reviea noted that this also ties to the culture of if the classroom teachers see this as a competition that is going to infringe upon the likelihood of their continued employment. Although not directly a part of the current discussion, Dr. Reviea noted that it is part of the nuanced culture. In Chesterfield County, there is no policy for students to attend school for online courses. However, different schools provide spaces for students depending on the child's prior academic success. They are required to be enrolled and to take exams at a physical location.

Loudoun County is similar to other school divisions with no requirement for face-to-face, but some students do take courses at school. This occurs because it may fit in their schedule or they are in study hall. Other students take courses outside of school to reduce scheduling conflicts or for additional credit.

Loudoun County also offered a course through a summer program, this year, with approximately 1,000 students. Computer labs were open throughout Loudoun for three days a week, three hours a day with three staff members at each location. The computer lab usage was very low over the summer and typically the same students used them. Next time there will only be one lab open and available so that students can still have the opportunity to use the technology.

Franklin County does not have any policy in place regarding online courses being taken face-to-face. In Newport News, the vast majority of students who take online courses do so in school; this happens for a couple of reasons. The first is due to how classes and online courses are scheduled and the second is the ability to mentor the students.

A question was asked regarding members' agreement with the assessment that high school students tend to utilize their mentors more for technical assistance than instructional activities. Ms. Cheri Kelleher noted that Virtual Virginia's mentors are not instructional at the high school level. The mentor is not required to be a teacher.

There were mixed responses to this question. Dr. Haun noted that the school divisions represented have a variety of expectation.

Ms. Gail Warren noted, from a Virtual Virginia point of view, that each school division is very autonomous in their policies and requirements vary from one division to another. This does pose academic integrity issues and school divisions are working to remedy this.

Mr. Mark Saunders mentioned the assessment regarding the importance of learning coaches at the lower levels. A question was asked about how qualified the learning coaches should be at the lower level versus the higher level. Mr. Maxlow noted that it is a lot more difficult to be a learning coach at the high school level especially when they are taking advanced courses. Ms. Jean Weller noted the

reason many students are taking online courses is because there is no one at the school to help them. It was further noted that students in higher levels have more independence.

Dr. Reviea noted that sometime a competition between the teacher and learning coach can be seen. This brings the question of who does the child turn to for instructional support. The teacher in the classrooms tended to want an aid in the room as the coach rather than another math specialist. Ms. Kelleher noted that math teachers are never selected as mentors for Virtual Virginia. Some school divisions tend to use a librarian or someone similar. Dr. Reviea noted that this may be due to the teacher's contract and how instructional time is defined.

A question was asked about any additional comments on the JLARC report. It was noted that the report is out and available and that chapter six is about online learning.

Ms. Kelleher noted that the chapter seemed to confuse the state offered program with the Multidivisional Online Providers.

Dr. Haun noted that students taking AP courses via Virtual Virginia and those taking courses for remediation were not completely distinct and assessed in the report. It was noted that it is here that one could see how support differs.

It was noted that many try to define what a good online student is, but there are many variables that create a good online student. There is no set definition.

e. MOP and Virtual Virginia Reports to the Board of Education

Mark Saunders opened this discussion with the MOP report.

Mr. Saunders noted that in the May meeting he updated the members about the MOP applications that were submitted. In August/September monitoring took place. Legislation stipulates that there be a monitoring process in place and the Board has approved the process.

Reports are received from MOPs in June and July. Based on the reports, 12 of the 24 approved MOPs offered courses during the last school year. No issues were noted.

The upcoming application period begins in January 2016. Because of the updated Health and Physical Education and Foreign Language SOLs, the MOPs are required to submit updated courses/course information based on new SOLs. Updates for History and Social Science SOLs are not due until the 2017-2018 school year.

If during this time communication is received regarding LEAs that have a contract with a MOPs, it is addressed. If the matter is more pressing, it is addressed at different times. Letters of recommendation of continued approval will go out in the near future.

It was noted that there are discrepancies in the enrollment data between the MOPs and student record collection. Mr. Saunders noted that after a presentation of what a MOP is at a data conference, the numbers between the MOPs and student record collections appeared more aligned. The following year produced dissimilar results.

Assessment data collected through student record collection shows percentage of students who have taken at least one virtual course through a MOP and participation in one of four assessments. There were under 2,000 students served by MOPs. Forty-five percent of the 1,365 courses offered are based on SOLs.

Mr. Saunders noted that every spring DOE sends the MOPs links to surveys to disseminate to the parents of their students. They are asked to work with the local school divisions to get information. In the future, the method for collecting this information may change somewhat. Mr. Saunders noted he may contact local school divisions to help increase parent participation in the surveys. There were only 78 responses and most came from CCPS Online.

Mr. Saunders noted that he would also like to do a survey of the LEAs.

A question was asked about summer enrollment being included in the numbers for data collection.

Mr. Saunders noted that he will discuss this topic further with the data managers to gain clarity.

A question was asked about other school divisions' experiences with parents choosing to not have their students take the SOLs with the division. It was noted that it is a national trend to forego taking standardized tests whether online or face-to-face. Some are needed to verify credits, but overall unsure about how not taking SOLs will play out in Virginia. It was noted that there are contradictions between what is required by local school divisions in regards to NCLB and the trend of higher education resisting standardized tests like the SAT. Accountability at the higher education level is much different than at the local level.

It was also noted that classes required and classes accepted as non-elective are changing and makes course selection more difficult.

Dr. Haun noted that SCHEV is developing guidelines on what colleges should accept in terms of AP and IB courses.

Cheri Kelleher presented the Virtual Virginia (VVA) report.

Virtual Virginia only partners with local school divisions, but does not reward credits and aligns with Virginia's SOL. The AP courses provided are NCAA approved and during the 2014-2015 school year, VVA offered 56 courses.

Virtual Virginia has 62 highly qualified teachers with an average student-teacher ratio at 109:1. Over 99 percent of students enrolled are from Virginia Public Schools. Over 20,000 students have completed the Economics and Personal Finance course. Sixty-five local school divisions returned the agreement to host the VVA course(s) with the local system and 41 are hosted by VVA. As of this meeting, there are 10,448 course enrollments; 4,310 in VVA-led courses and 6,338 in Economics and Personal Finance.

The waiting list data does not reflect course need because schools tend to enroll students into multiple sections of the same course. This is typically done to ensure the student is accepted. The full-time high school pilot program began September 8, 2015, with 90 students in 41 school divisions. As of this meeting, transfer students were still being accepted and applications for the Algebra I Outreach program are being accepted.

It was noted that both pilot programs will be added as appendices to the Board's annual report.

f. Copia

Jean Weller, Virginia Department of Education, presented.

Copia is the company DOE is working with to develop the online marketplace. (Copia is Virginia's online textbook marketplace.) The process is going slow because it is changing the paradigm of textbook adoption/purchasing. Copia is working with two different school divisions and publishers. The company is developing a process that will work for all parties involved.

They are working on their pilot program this year with foreign language textbooks. There are several school divisions participating and details are being handled by Copia. As progress is being made, issues arise. For example, there were a few school divisions that believed they bought digital textbooks when they actually did not. Copia is negotiating with the publisher and the school division to deliver the digital product the division wants.

It was noted that although larger publishers have agreed to help develop this textbook marketplace, they have not been as forthcoming with materials as anticipated.

It was noted that another state was negotiating a contract with Amazon for digital textbooks and this development may shift trends with publishers.

Mr. George Washington noted the he met with Copia representatives and that Copia would be serving as a clearing house. He asked Copia various questions regarding what they will provide and how the program would benefit their school division.

Mr. Washington asked Copia about implementation of its program and implementation has been done abroad and in the United States. He noted that he was left with more questions than answers. Ms. Weller noted that the questions are part of the project as they are working to change current trends. The concept of Copia is to have one login to access and track multiple resources on almost any device.

Mr. Washington noted that school divisions tend to get discounts for continuous use with one company and asked if the discounts will remain with a one-stop platform. Ms. Weller responded that Copia is not going to provide the discounts school divisions have been offered by individual companies.

A question was asked about the plan for Copia moving forward. Ms. Weller noted that they will be learning from the pilot and anticipate negotiating more agreements with publishers. She further noted that they are experiencing more pushback from the K-12 groups than the higher education and publishing groups.

A question was asked about the state arrangement and time frame for this pilot program. Ms. Weller noted that Copia's agreement is with VITA. Mr. Saunders also noted that Copia's contract is with VITA and VDOE's use of Copia will be during the length on the Copia/VITA contract.

Ms. Weller noted that another challenge to the process is information alignment between physical textbooks and online materials. Copia is also looking to develop a textbook review for teachers for the pilot.

Dr. Rankin noted that another issue could be how local school divisions purchase textbooks. Many school divisions purchase textbooks every five or so years; however, with a digital subscription they would need to pay a yearly fee and this shifts current norms.

It was noted that funding for textbooks, digital or physical, is an important issue within the divisions.

Dr. Reveia noted that digital subscriptions to textbooks pose tougher financial constraints than physical books. A school division may encounter budget issues and it may not be certain that subscriptions, and devices needed to use subscriptions, can be maintained.

It was noted that many school divisions are using Open Education and this lead to a question asking the purpose of physical textbooks.

g. Broadband Project

Mark Saunders (Bobby Keener), Virginia Department of Education, presented.

Mr. Saunders noted that everything mentioned in the meeting centers around the Internet and having access to it.

There will be three proposals submitted to the Governor to be included with the budget proposal. The project lead is Bobby Keener, Chief Innovations Officer. This project is a continuation of the work with the Education Superhighway.

The Governor's announcement was made in June 2014 after the speed test was done in September 2013. The test was done to determine Internet access and costs to LEAs.

Representatives from Education Superhighway and Ms. Gail Warren traveled the state touring local school divisions. In addition, they held a summit in Harrisonburg regarding the projects.

After their touring, Education Superhighway noted that several divisions lacked fiber for connections; areas had access to the Mid-Atlantic Broadband Communities Corporation; there were bright spots and various other issues to Internet connections.

There are four phases: 1. Research and assessment (Fall 2014); 2. Division Engagement (Winter 2015); 3. Develop and test model solutions to improve connectivity (Spring 2015 – Summer 2016); 4. Adoption and Implementation (Fall 2015 – Fall 2018).

They have collected all of this information and will add to what they have. In addition, the information will be used for the three projects/proposals.

The first project is about fiber and the installation of fiber lines in the ground. Special fiber construction project are eligible for additional 10 percent matching funds from eRate program. The project may also include municipalities, hospitals, and other entities.

The broadband access project will deal with the bandwidth. VITA will assist with the creation of a possible RFP from the DOE and will use the project to gain knowledge for future RFP from VITA

for state master contracts. The project and funding will seek to increase bandwidth needs and managed support.

The Wi-Fi (Managed Internal Broadband Services) will deal with the internal networks within the divisions. This project will be done in conjunction with The Friday Institute and Education Superhighway. A “needs assessment” was also sent to LEAs for responses and to determine needs. Funding for these projects will also include new positions at VDOE to include a dedicated eRate person, support technicians, network designers, a program manager, and a school security position. A question was asked about the projects being funded. It was noted that the answer is not yet known.

(3) Follow up to questions from spring meeting

Current programs and projects, such as the Algebra 1 and Full-Time pilot programs, should be able to answer a few of the questions from the previous meeting. The intent of the Algebra 1 Outreach pilot is to assist teachers with resources and not to replace them in the classroom. This can also be used as professional development for the teachers.

A question was asked about what more can be done to support professional development for teachers. It was noted that during the Algebra 1 pilot, classes are twice a week and eMedia’s videos can be used in professional development. Dr. Reveia noted that these resources are not intended to alleviate problems in school divisions regarding hiring high-quality teachers and this should be clear.

Ms. Kelleher noted that the pilot program’s potential success could be the catalyst for local divisions to develop their own programs.

Any questions regarding more support for professional development and the process in school divisions implementation of online learning will be developed as all the answers are not immediately known.

Mr. Washington noted that the computer donation program is a good way to assist students that who do not have access to the technology, but it has become difficult to give away because of the prevalence of smartphones.

At the end of discussion, Mr. Saunders introduced Ms. Rebecca Hawthorne. She is the new Virtual Learning Coordinator.

(4) Special education aids, tools, resources, challenges

John Eisenberg, Virginia Department of Education, presented.

Mr. Eisenberg noted that he sits on the National Center for Online Learning for student with disabilities. The Center has been trying to study how to integrate students in special education and technology. There are many questions pertaining to online options for special education learning with very little answers. There is hope to develop programs for students in special education via VVA and MOPs. This provides a great deal of promise.

There are accessibility issues that come up for students in special education, especially for those with more severe disabilities. For example, students with little or no vision have technology setbacks because various features were not built in; they are inaccessible to screen readers because of programs like Flash; or they need documents in braille or large print, but it is just not available or in the correct format online. In

addition, teachers tend to find that outside resources, such as some YouTube links, around the Internet are inaccessible also.

Mr. Eisenberg noted that many students with autism flourish in the online environment, but a completely online experience may keep them from learning various social skills and communication skills. There could be privacy issues while sharing information online, especially for some students with autism that cannot read social cues or if administrators are communicating online (disability disclosure). Students with limited mobility may have an easier time in a blended environment. However, if they are taking classes solely online then one has to ensure all their equipment is accessible to the student. The student also needs to have all their support in place especially if it is in their IEP. It has been found that electronic documents are sometimes not in the correct format for students with disabilities. Mr. Eisenberg noted that in many instances students will not self-disclose a disability; this happens for various reasons. However, this makes supporting the student more difficult because the teacher is not informed.

Mr. Eisenberg noted that reading disabilities are increasing among students and linked content is inaccessible because of its reading level or it may not be in the correct format. They are finding that students are not being considered for online learning because of their disability. This happens because some special education teachers steer parents away from them due to fears and worries regarding the courses, although, there are students using VVA.

Mr. Eisenberg noted that one issue they are having is how to give guidance to IEP teams; how to determine which students will do well in online environments and the support needed.
(What is the least restrictive environment?)

A lot of special education students have testing accommodations which brings about the question, what will be the test accommodations for students, in the virtual environment, and are they appropriate.

Mr. Eisenberg noted the Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) which evaluates whether a product meets the 508 standards. He also noted the Universal Design of Learning checklist. By using this checklist one could evaluate if their product/item will provide an array of services for learning. There have been major legislative shifts in this area of education. For example, special education services must be provided by the program in which the student is enrolled. This legislation also gave unilateral choice for parents to enroll students into MOPs.

Although good progress is being made, there is the expectation that students will not be pigeonholed into online classes because of behavior or disability. There are no guidelines for a part-time, full-time, or blended program for special education students.

A question was asked about what is happening around the state in regards to special education. Dr. Haun noted that speech pathologists are being licensed differently and not through the DOE. This change in licensure is causing the cost for speech pathologists to rise; speech pathologists are becoming too expensive for school divisions. Mr. Eisenberg noted that the use of “tele-speech” is on the rise. “Tele-speech” is speech pathology via the Web using Web cameras and other technologies. It is an emerging market and local school divisions may have to go out-of-state to get this service.

Mr. Eisenberg noted that it is important to ensure the services are provided to special education students. If there are any compliance issues, it may lead to federal intervention.

Mr. Eisenberg noted that there is not much guidance for co-teaching in the virtual environment. However, there is a shift to begin outlining what that guidance should be.

A question was asked about the challenges of knowing what the responsibility is of teachers/staff and special education students regarding personalizing the technology they use. Mr. Eisenberg noted that teaching special education students to be self-advocates will be an important topic in the future. This includes explicit instruction on knowing what options are available and how to apply the best one for them. A question was asked about devices used and what will happen when a parent has a preference for a specific device. Mr. Eisenberg noted that the federal government recently issued guidance saying that a child has the right to self-direct and choose the device that works for them. This could cause challenges financially and if there are many different devices used.

Ms. Weller noted that the challenges extend further to divisions or schools that use only one platform; e.g.: A school division only uses PCs or only uses Macs.

A question was asked about MOPs providing technology or the flexibility for students to adapt programs/technologies how they want and if this would create a less restrictive environment. Mr. Eisenberg agreed that it would. He emphasized that using the Universal Design of Learning checklist could eliminate most issues. He also asked the members to relay to him the issues or needs they have as his office develops guidance.

A question was asked about sign language. Mr. Eisenberg noted that students with disabilities are less likely to attain an advanced diploma than those without disabilities. He continued that foreign language requirements seem to be the barrier between the advanced diploma and not advanced. Currently, sign language is an option, but finding a highly qualified sign language teacher that is also a foreign language teacher is proving to be quite difficult. Ms. Weller noted that finding sign language textbooks from publishers, via Copia, is difficult as well. Mr. Eisenberg noted that students in special education are willing to take courses in American Sign Language, if available. He would like to have a sign language course developed and offered through VVA and potentially have grants available for experts to create the course. Dr. Haun noted when the next meeting will be held and that they can discuss additional topics regarding special education and virtual/online learning. This may lead to programs being developed during the summer to implement during the next school year.

(5) Open Discussion

Mr. Saunders noted that legislation did not specify term limits for VLAC members.

A question was asked about possible topics for the next meeting. Dr. Haun noted that the topic of special education will be a topic discussed. Members are encouraged to discuss their needs and suggestions during the next meeting.

Dr. Haun noted that more information regarding the pilot program(s) will be discussed.

Dr. Rankin suggested discussing what school divisions are obligated to provide to students beyond a full course load and should overloading be disallowed if all the support is not there. Dr. Haun noted he will

discuss this topic with Mr. Kent Dickey because of the financial implications. Dr. Reveia asked about providing high-quality education to students and incentives to allow or disallow overloading.

It was noted that overloading can impact teacher contracts. Questions were asked about how are teachers paid when teaching multiple courses (close to or over their contract amount), how/if the teacher is involved in other school activities, is their work spread out during the year, and should the contract terms change as the school environment changes.

A question was asked about reporting and students who graduate early. It was noted that the reporting is the same with reports starting the year the student started the ninth grade.

Dr. Haun noted that ten school divisions in Region 1 have high school innovation grants to develop a new completely virtual high school. He suggested that those involved present during the next meeting.

Dr. Rankin asked how pre-services are engaged in education. He noted that there should be a shift in how colleges are educating teachers, especially as the learning environment changes. Dr. Haun noted that a SCHEV representative should be invited to a meeting next year.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

The next VLAC meeting is Tuesday, April 19, 2016.