



#195-21

**Commonwealth of Virginia
Virginia Department of Education
Superintendent's Memo #195-21**

DATE: July 23, 2021
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: 2021 Standards of Quality (SOQ)

This memo provides a summarization of the 2021 legislation amending the [Standards of Quality \(SOQ\)](#) in the *Code of Virginia*. In its 2021 session, the General Assembly amended Standards 1 through 5 of the SOQ. Unless otherwise noted, all changes became law effective on July 1, 2021.

For the full text of each standard in the SOQ, please see §§ [22.1-253.13:1 through 22.1-253.13:10](#) in the *Code of Virginia*.

Revisions to Standard 1 ([§ 22.1-253.13:1](#))

[HB1865](#) (Delaney) *Reading intervention services for certain students in kindergarten through grade 3*. Requires reading intervention services for students in kindergarten through grade three who demonstrate deficiencies based on their individual performance on the Standards of Learning reading test or any reading diagnostic test that meets criteria established by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) to be evidence-based, including services that are grounded in the science of reading, and include explicit, systematic, sequential, and cumulative instruction, to include phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, vocabulary development, and text comprehension as appropriate based on the student's demonstrated reading deficiencies. The bill requires the parent of each student who

receives such reading intervention services to be notified before the services begin and the progress of each such student to be monitored throughout the provision of services.

Revisions to Standard 2 (§ [22.1-253.13:2](#))

[SB1257](#) (McClellan) *Specialized student support positions*. Requires each local school board to provide at least three specialized student support positions per 1,000 students. The bill defines specialized student support positions to include school social workers, school psychologists, school nurses, licensed behavior analysts, licensed assistant behavior analysts, and other licensed health and behavioral positions, and permits the positions to either be employed by the school board or provided through contracted services.

Revisions to Standard 3 (§ [22.1-253.13:3](#))

[HB2027](#) (Coyner) and [SB1357](#) (Dunnivant) *Standards of Learning assessments in reading and mathematics, grades three through eight; individual student growth*. Requires the Board of Education to establish, in lieu of a one-time end-of-year assessment and for the purpose of providing measures of individual student growth over the course of the school year, a through-year growth assessment system, aligned with the Standards of Learning, for the administration of reading and mathematics assessments in grades three through eight. The bill requires such through-year growth assessment system to include at least one beginning-of-year, one mid-year, and one end-of-year assessment in order to provide individual student growth scores over the course of the school year, provided that the total time scheduled for taking all such assessments shall not exceed 150 percent of the time scheduled for taking a single end-of-year proficiency assessment. The bill requires VDOE to ensure adequate training for teachers and principals on how to interpret and use student growth data from such assessments to improve reading and mathematics instruction in grades three through eight throughout the school year. The bill provides that with such funds and content as are available for such purpose, such through-year growth assessment system shall provide accurate measurement of a student's performance, through computer adaptive technology, using test items at, below, and above the student's grade level as necessary. The bill requires full implementation of such system no later than the 2022-2023 school year and partial implementation during the 2021-2022 school year consisting of one beginning-of-year assessment and one end-of-year assessment.

Revisions to Standard 4 (§ [22.1-253.13:4](#))

[HB2299](#) (Carr) and [SB1288](#) (Dunnavant) *Department of Education and Board of Education; duties related to special education*. Requires VDOE to (i) provide training and guidance documents to local school divisions on the development of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for children with disabilities, (ii) develop a training module for each individual who participates in an IEP meeting, with the exception of parents, (iii) annually conduct structured reviews of a sample of IEPs from a sufficiently large sample of local school divisions to verify that the IEPs are in compliance with state and federal laws and regulations and are of high quality, (iv) develop and maintain a statewide plan for improving (a) its ongoing oversight of local practices related to transition planning and services for children with disabilities and (b) technical assistance and guidance provided for postsecondary transition planning and services for children with disabilities, (v) develop and maintain a statewide strategic plan for recruiting and retaining special education teachers, and (vi) (a) conduct a one-time targeted review of the transition sections of a random sample of students' IEPs in each school division; (b) communicate its findings to each local school division, school board, and local special education advisory committee; and (c) ensure that local school divisions correct any IEPs that are found to be out of compliance no later than the end of the 2021-22 school year. These bills build on recommendations from the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission's *K-12 Special Education in Virginia* report.

Revisions to Standard 5 (§ [22.1-253.13:5](#))

[HB1904](#) (Jenkins) and [SB1196](#) (Locke) *Cultural Competency; teachers and other licensed school board employees*. Requires teacher, principal, and division superintendent evaluations to include an evaluation of cultural competency. The bill requires every person seeking initial licensure or renewal of a license from the Board of Education (i) to complete instruction or training in cultural competency and (ii) with an endorsement in history and social sciences to complete instruction in African American history, as prescribed by the Board. The bill also requires each school board to adopt and implement policies that require each teacher and any other school board employee holding a license issued by the Board to complete cultural competency training, in accordance with guidance issued by the Board, at least every two years.

For more information

Please direct questions about this information to the Policy Office at policy@doe.virginia.gov or (804) 225-2092.

JFL/EMC

A. Attachment: [2021 Standards of Quality](#) (DOCX)

Resources:

- [Standards of Quality in the Code of Virginia](#) (full text of the SOQ)
- [Superintendent's Memo #176-21](#) (Final Legislative Report from the 2021 Virginia General Assembly)
- [Standards of Quality webpage](#) (includes previous year's versions of the SOQ)