# Superintendent’s Memo #141-20


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: June 12, 2020

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction

## SUBJECT: 2019-2020 SOQ Compliance and Other Certifications Data Collection

Each year, in accordance with § [22.1-18](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-18/) of the *Code of Virginia*, the Board of Education’s annual report to the General Assembly includes the level of local school board compliance with the [*Standards of Quality*](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title22.1/chapter13.2/)(SOQ).  In addition, other statutory, regulatory, and budgetary provisions also require annual certifications or responses from each school division. The information needed to fulfill these requirements is collected annually through the [SOQ Compliance and Other Certifications Data Collection](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/info_management/data_collection/soq_compliance/index.shtml).

### COVID-19 Impact

All school divisions in Virginia have been impacted by the mandatory school closure as a result of COVID-19.

* If a requirement in the SOQ Compliance application was waived by the Superintendent of Public Instruction due to COVID-19, please answer “Yes” to the question. The list of waivers and relief measures is available here: [COVID-19 Waivers and Flexibility](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/health_medical/covid-19/waivers-and-flexibilities.docx).
* If your school division was unable to comply with any questions in the SOQ Compliance application due to the school closures, and that requirement was not waived, please answer “No” to the question and enter “COVID19” in the accompanying text box.

### Dates for Completion

* **July 1, 2020** –The 2019-2020 SOQ Compliance application will be available through the Single Sign-On for Web-based Systems (SSWS) portal beginning Wednesday, July 1, 2020.
* **August 7, 2020** – All school divisions must complete data submission via the SSWS portal no later than Friday, August 7, 2020.
* **August 21, 2020** – The “SOQ Compliance Verification Report” must be submitted, with signatures, to policy@doe.virginia.gov by Friday, August 21, 2020.

### Instructions for Completion

***Data Submission*** – First, complete the data entry in the SOQ Compliance application in SSWS by August 7, 2020. This includes two sections:

* “Section One: SOQ Standards” – this section requires a written corrective action plan in the accompanying text box for any element of noncompliance.
* “Section Two: Other Reporting Requirements” – this section does not permit empty text boxes. All text boxes must include either a substantive response or the term “Not applicable.”

The application window will lock after you submit all data and click the “Finish” button and/or after the submission deadline of August 7, 2020. Once locked, you must email the Policy Office at policy@doe.virginia.gov to request that the SOQ Compliance application be unlocked.

***Verification Report*** – Once the data submission is complete in SSWS, the division superintendent and school board chair must sign the “SOQ Compliance Verification Report”. (This verification report can be accessed by selecting “Reports” from the menu on the right side of the screen in SSWS.) After signatures are obtained, please scan and email the verification report to the Policy Office at policy@doe.virginia.gov.

### New/Updated Questions for 2019-2020

The following questions have been substantively updated or are new for the 2019-2020 SOQ Compliance and Other Certifications Data Collection:

#### Section One: SOQ Standards

* Standard Two – H.1.d (*updated*)
	+ This question asks school divisions to certify compliance with the school counselor ratios, which were amended by the 2019 General Assembly. It should be noted that the school counselor ratios in Standard Two were superseded by language in Appropriation Act, [Item 136.B.7.g](https://budget.lis.virginia.gov/item/2019/1/HB1700/Chapter/1/136) for the 2019-2020 school year. Accordingly, the school counselor ratios in the Appropriation Act are reflected in this question.
* Standard Three – A.3 (*updated*)
	+ This question has been updated to align with the Board’s accreditation process, which requires school divisions to (i) submit corrective action plans for any school in the local school division that does not meet the standards established by the Board and (ii) enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Board for any failure to demonstrate progress in developing or implementing a corrective action plan.
* Standard Four – D.1 (*new*)
	+ This question certifies the new requirement, in accordance with [HB 442 (2018)](https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?181+sum+HB442), that notification be provided to each English language learner of the availability of testing accommodations prior to the student's participation in any career and technical education credential certification, which may include an industry certification, a state licensure examination, a national occupational competency assessment, or the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery.

#### Section Two: Other Miscellaneous Reporting Requirements

* School Calendar
	+ Part two of this question is new this year and regards an optional early school start date for the 2020-2021 school year. Through this certification, the Board of Education grants a “good cause waiver” to begin school prior to the allowable school start date permitted by § [22.1-79.1](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-79.1/) of the *Code* to any school division seeking additional instructional days for lost teaching time in the 2019-2020 school year due to extended closures required by COVID-19.
* Length of School Term
	+ This question asks school divisions to certify that 180 days or 990 hours of instruction was provided in the 2019-2020 school year. An answer choice has been added to certify that the school division provided less than 180 days or 990 hours, but the Board of Education provided the division with a waiver. If selecting this answer choice, please enter “Waiver” in the accompanying text box.
* 140-Clock-Hour Requirement Waiver
	+ This question asks school divisions to certify adherence to the Board’s guidelines regarding alternatives to the 140-clock-hour requirement. The question has been amended to reflect that school divisions without a school board policy on 140-clock-hour waivers were permitted to use such waivers for the 2019-2020 school year, as stated in the Board’s [*Emergency Guidelines: Local Alternatives to Awarding Standard Units of Credit*](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/health_medical/covid-19/emergency-guidelines-140-clock-hours-final.docx).

### Pre-Labor Day Waiver Certifications

Please note that, effective July 1, 2019, it is no longer necessary for school divisions to seek waivers to begin the school year prior to Labor Day, except for certain divisions providing year-round instructional programs. Accordingly, the portion of the SOQ Compliance and Other Certifications Data Collection addressing Pre-Labor Day waivers has been eliminated.

### Questions

Please direct any questions regarding the SOQ Compliance Data Collection to the Policy Office at (804) 225-2092 or policy@doe.virginia.gov.

JFL/EMM

### Attachment

1. [Complete list of questions included in the 2019-2020 SOQ Compliance and Other Certifications Data Collection](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2020/141-20a.docx)