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| **Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item** | **Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia** |

# Agenda Item: N

## Date: April 22, 2021

### Title: Office of School Quality’s Response to Recommendations from the Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee’s Report: *Operations and Performance of the Department of Education*

#### Presenter: Dr. Aurelia Ortiz, Director of School Quality

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## Purpose of Presentation:

For information only. No action required.

**Executive Summary:**   
In October 2020 the General Assembly’s Joint Legislative Audit Review Committee (JLARC) released its report, *Operations and Performance of the Virginia Department of Education.* The report found that the Office of School Quality has more schools in need of improvement than comparable offices in neighboring states and provided three recommendations (numbered here as they appear in the report)

* RECOMMENDATION 8 The Virginia Department of Education should develop and implement a plan to guide its transition to a new school improvement model and estimate the additional staffing required to effectively implement the new model. The plan should be presented to the Board of Education and transmitted to the House Education and Appropriations committees and to the Senate Education and Health and Finance and Appropriations committees, no later than June 30, 2021.​
* RECOMMENDATION 9 The General Assembly may wish to consider appropriating additional funding for new staff positions in the Virginia Department of Education’s Office of School Quality to strengthen its work with school divisions in the school improvement program.​ The GA is awaiting our feedback on Recommendation 8 before considering these funds.
* RECOMMENDATION 10 The General Assembly may wish to consider amending § 22.1-23 of the Code of Virginia to direct the superintendent of public instruction to (i) develop and implement an effective school improvement program, (ii) identify measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the services the Office of School Quality provides to school divisions, (iii) evaluate and make changes as needed to ensure effectiveness, and (iv) annually report to the Board of Education. The GA has not yet completed this requirement.

Changes to the Office of School Quality’s (OSQ) approach to school improvement were underway prior to the report’s release and have continued to date. These changes include balancing the demands of compliance to the Standards of Quality and assisting schools and divisions build local capacity to meet the standards, aligning OSQ personnel with VDOE Superintendent’s Regions, coordinating support to school divisions with other VDOE offices, and providing technical assistance via webinars and virtual conferences. Division and school leaders have articulated their support for this new, collaborative approach. However, given the OSQ’s limited resources, it is unable to affect the systemic change needed to improve all schools across the Commonwealth.

To meet the Board’s Priority #3 from the Comprehensive Plan, the OSQ needs to increase its capacity to fully support a system of continuous improvement for all schools. After researching effective state education agency (SEA) approaches to school improvement and scanning neighboring SEA organizational models, the OSQ determined that the VDOE should establish an interagency School Quality Committee that meets regularly to coordinate support to schools and divisions, and reorganize and staff the OSQ to provide high quality differentiated support to the field.

Employing a case management approach, the OSQ would collaborate with divisions, schools, educators, families and regional partners through a continuous improvement process to ensure each child in Virginia has access to a high-quality education. The OSQ would do this through regional support teams (RSTs) aligned to the school board regions. RSTs provide professional learning opportunities and need-based coaching focused on building leadership capacity, team development, and inclusive instruction practices to assist schools in improving educational outcomes. Each team would be task organized with capabilities to address the following functional areas:

* Continuous Improvement
* Curriculum and Instruction
* Data Analytics
* School Readiness
* Human Resources
* Special Education
* Operations
* Literacy
* Principal and Leadership Development
* Family Engagement
* Career and Technical Education

The desired outcomes from this regional support model include an increased ability for the VDOE to provide support as follows:

* Build Capacity (superintendents, division leadership and principals)
* Strengthen instructional leadership
* Utilize data to support division decision making
* Provide technical support for aligned quality curriculum and instruction
* Integrate continuous improvement strategies
* Align division level systems and processes, governance, resources and priorities

## Action Requested:

No action requested.

## Superintendent’s Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education receive this presentation.

## Previous Review or Action:

No previous review or action.

**Background Information and Statutory Authority:**  
This presentation is in response to recommendation made by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee in its October 2020 report.

**Timetable for Further Review/Action:**  
No further action is required at this time.

## Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:

The impact is contingent upon the approved model of support.