# Virginia Board of Education Committee on the Standards of Quality

# Wednesday, June 16, 2021

# 1:00p.m to 2:30p.m

# East Reading Room, Patrick Henry Building

## Welcome and Opening Comments

The following Committee members were present for the meeting: Mr. Dan Gecker, Ms. Anne Holton, Dr. Jamelle Wilson, Dr. Tammy Mann, and Dr. Stewart Roberson. Dr. James Lane, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Emily Webb, Director of Board Relations for VDOE, were also present.

Other guests in attendance included: Dr. Leslie Sale, Director of Policy (VDOE) and Holly Coy, Superintendent of Policy, Equity, and Communications (VDOE).

## Opening and Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Dan Gecker, chair of the committee, convened the meeting at 1:00 p.m. and opened the floor to public comments. There were no public comments.

**Discussion of the Committee Presentation**

*2021 Biennial Review of the Standards of Quality: Revisiting the 2019 Prescriptions and Evaluating Progress (VDOE Staff)*

Dr. Leslie Sale, Director of Policy, provided the Board with an overview of the Standards of Quality (SOQ), including an overview of the 2019 prescriptions, amendments to the SOQ from the 2020 and 2021 General Assembly (GA) Sessions, and a review of opportunities for consideration during the current biennial review.

Ms. Holton asked how the prior school counselor ratios were structured. Ms. Holton also commented that the Board recommended 1:250 for the school counselor ratio and the GA approved 1:325. Additionally, for the specialized support positions, the Board recommended 4: 1,000 and the GA adopted 3: 1,000. Because of this discrepancy, the Board may consider reaffirming the recommendations for the current biennial review.

* Dr. Sale and Ms. Webb shared that the 1: 450 ratio was scaled and based on the size of the school and grade levels.
* Ms. Holton asked about the Board’s recommendation for the specialized support positions to be taken out from under the student support positon cap.
  + Dr. Sale clarified that the specialized support positions were taken out of the support position cap by the GA and are now in a separate staffing category. These positions are now funded separately through the SOQ formula.
  + Ms. Holton stated that this gives school divisions more expectations and resources to meet specialized positions and also frees up funds that were under the support cap for other support positions.
  + Dr. Lane shared that school divisions are spending beyond the support caps so this does not have a practical impact in most cases.

Mr. Gecker provided the committee with historical context for previous SOQ reviews and Board approach. Mr. Gecker added that the focus should be on the things within the purview of the Board.

Dr. Wilson commented on progress by the GA in 2020 and 2021 and asked about progress in relation to teacher shortages such as how do changes in teacher ranks and support position ranks impact supply and demand. What does the pipeline look like for teacher shortages in terms of the supply? What supports are available in localities to fill support positions, such as social workers, school psychologists, and behavior analysts?

* Dr. Lane stated that the department can provide the Board with a presentation on the supply and demand report. The department has also initiated new data collection requirements related to teacher supply and demand and backgrounds of teachers.
* Ms. Coy shared that when we think about supply and demand, in some areas where progress has been made, we are funding positions that had existed because school divisions recognized a need.
* Dr. Wilson asked if the department collects data on what the pipeline looks like from teacher education program, such as through a partnership with the State Council for Higher Education for Virginia.
  + Ms. Coy replied yes.
* Dr. Lane clarified that the department has better data on graduation trim than in process students.

Dr. Mann asked about the history of data collection and expressed interest in more information on the SOQ pilot program.

* Dr. Sale shared information on the history of SOQ data collection, current data limitations, and objectives of a new pilot program.
  + Ms. Webb shared that the biggest challenge from the 2018-2019 SOQ review was data limitations. The department did not have exit survey, race and ethnicity, vacancy, or teacher effectiveness data. One of the recommendations of the Board was to improve data collection.
  + Dr. Lane shared that divisions have historically self-reported whether they were compliant or not. Based on the recommendations of the JLARC study and GA action of granting two new positions, the department will begin verifying self-compliance. The department was also asked to estimate the future costs for verification of SOQ compliance of all divisions. The two new staff positions will complete on site verifications of SOQs, determine how many hours it takes to verify small and large divisions, and provide data for the department to calculate the amount of resources needed. The pilot study will allow the department to provide better estimates on how many more resources the department will need.

Ms. Holton made a request for staff guidance on (1) what the Board will reaffirm from the 2019 prescriptions and if adjustments should be made on the three items that the GA acted upon, (2) recommendations from the JLARC report and GA action such as the school improvement program, (3) and new considerations such as facility standards and instructional technology resource teachers (ITRTs). Ms. Holton requested an update from staff on the status of ITRT. Ms. Holton also stated that the Board does not have the authority to pursue the two recommendations from the AASAC to require the equitable distribution of experienced teachers among high- and low-poverty schools and reconfigure school division boundaries and school attendance zones to promote integration and advance equitable opportunities for all students.

* Dr. Lane agreed with Ms. Holton’s recommendation on the standards for facilities and suggested discussing this in the SOQ committee next month to determine if this should be SOA or SOQ. Dr. Lane added that his highest priority is special education staff ratios which have not changed in decades. When the regulations were last promulgated, the plan was to come back address staff ratios. Dr. Lane suggested kicking off the SOQ study of this. Dr. Lane also clarified that there was prior debate on the continued need for ITRT or just coaches, since technology is now a part of all instruction.
  + Dr. Roberson shared that the Commission on School Modernization may be a resource for data. The next meeting will cover what the basic facility looks like.
  + Mr. Gecker stated that he does not see the Board putting anything together around facilities for the 2021 standard revisions review because the issue is complicated and will require a year rather than months.
  + Ms. Holton asked to add an SOQ addressing facilities, in either SOQ or SOA, to the work plan for the next 18 to 24 months and also include Dr. Lane’s suggestion for staff to assist the Board with special education staff ratios
  + Dr. Lane stated the Board will want to study this. It is a six month project.
  + Dr. Wilson agreed with Ms. Holton’s three recommendations.

Mr. Gecker asked Ms. Holton about the areas where the GA has already made progress and should the Board conform the SOQ to the end product of that significant work as opposed to continuing to have a higher standard.

* Ms. Holton suggested that the Board should have a discussion about the question.
* Dr. Wilson stated that when the standard was set in 2019, there was a reason for the need. While the GA made progress, it may raise a question of is the need a need.
* Mr. Gecker clarified that the recommendation was based on the industry group recommendations. As a result of the work between 2018 and 2019, if the Board did this over again it might prioritize things differently, such as relieving the funding in one area in order to effectively prioritize another area. If the Board would have prioritized, it may have gone in a different direction.
* Ms. Holton shared that the recommendation for the counselor ratio was based on a national standards, but the specialized support positions may not have been grounded in standards.
* Ms. Webb stated that some of the recommendations were grounded in national standards but instead of prescribing individual standards for each category, we choose to allow more flexibility for school divisions to determine their priorities.
* Dr. Lane expressed caution about changing what the Board believes the need is. In terms of priority, the Board can convey in the letter to the GA that since the GA already granted 3;1,000 for specialized support staff and 1:325 ratio for school counselor staff, the Board recommends that the GA focus on other areas.
* Dr. Mann expressed agreement.
* Dr. Lane stated that for the EL, the money is there but not the methodology. However, the Board does not need to walk away from the methodology. Understanding that the funding need is different based on the EL level is very important.

The next meeting is scheduled for July 21st.

## Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30p.m.