# MINUTES Virginia Board of Education Standing Committee on the Standards of Quality

**Wednesday, September 18, 2019**

**1:30 p.m.**

**Jefferson Conference Room, James Monroe Building**

**101 North 14th Street, Richmond, Virginia**

## Welcome and Opening Comments

The following Board of Education (Board) members were present for the July 24, 2019 meeting of the Committee on the Standards of Quality: Kim Adkins, Diane Atkinson, Pamela Davis-Vaught, Dr. Francisco Durán, Daniel Gecker, Anne Holton, Tammy Mann, Dr. Keisha Pexton, and Dr. Jamelle Wilson. Dr. James Lane, Superintendent of Public Instruction, was also present.

Mr. Gecker, chair of this committee, convened the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

## Public Comment

Kathy Burcher of the Virginia Education Association (VEA) addressed the Board. On behalf of VEA, she requested that the Board’s Standards of Quality (SOQ) proposals regarding school nurses require a register nurse, and expressed concern regarding language in the equity fund proposal equating length of teacher service to quality of teaching.

Troilen Seward addressed the Board on behalf of the Virginia State Reading Association and the Virginia Academy of School Psychologists. She expressed gratitude to the Board for the inclusion of these organizations in the SOQ review process, and commended the Board for their perseverance and leadership in developing the SOQ proposals.

## Presentation: Overview of Revisions to the Draft Standards of Quality Proposals

Link to presentation: [Draft SOQ Proposals for Board of Education Consideration](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/committees_standing/quality/2019/draft-soq-proposals-for-consideration-sept%202019.docx) (Word)

Zachary Robbins, Director of Policy for the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), and Emily Webb, Director of Board Relations for VDOE, presented the following draft Standards of Quality (SOQ) proposals to the Board for consideration:

* Equity Fund (Enhanced At-Risk Add-On)
  + Consolidate the At-Risk Add On and Prevention, Intervention, and Remediation funds into a single, expanded At-Risk Add On fund within the SOQ
* Class Size Reduction
  + Move the K-3 Class Size Reduction program into the SOQ, and incorporate flexibility to allow larger class sizes for experienced teachers that are provided compensation adjustments
* Teacher Leaders and Teacher Mentor Programs
  + Establish a new Teacher Leader program, and expand the existing Teacher Mentor program, whereby additional compensation and additional time is provided during the instructional day for locally-designated staff to serve in leadership and mentorship program roles
* English Learner Teachers
  + Amend the staffing requirements for EL teachers to distribute positions based upon student proficiency levels, while maintaining local flexibility in deploying those positions
  + Staffing ratio ranges from 1:25 for least proficient, to 1:58 for most proficient
* Specialized Student Support Personnel
  + Remove the school nurse, school social worker, and school psychologist positions from the SOQ support position category
  + Create a new staffing category for “specialized student support personnel” in the SOQ, with specified ratios for these positions
* Reading Specialists
  + Provide reading specialist positions for students in grades K-5, based upon the number of students failing 3rd grade Standards of Learning reading assessments
* Work-Based Learning Coordinators
  + Establish state-level and regional work-based learning coordinators to foster connections between school divisions and the business community to advance work-based learning opportunities in each school division
* Principal Mentorship
  + Establish a statewide principal mentorship program to strengthen and foster the expanding role of quality school leaders that support teacher retention and student achievement
* School Counselors
  + Reaffirm the Board’s 2016 recommendation to provide one full-time for every 250 students
* Elementary School Principals
  + Reaffirm the Board’s 2016 recommendation to provide one full-time in every school
* Assistant Principals
  + Reaffirm the Board’s 2016 recommendation to provide one full-time for every 400 students
* Eliminate Recession-Era Savings and Flexibility Strategies
  + Reaffirm the Board’s 2016 recommendation to eliminate the measures that were implemented during the recession: the “support position cap” and the temporary flexibility language waiving certain staffing requirements

One Board member asked how the Equity Fund proposal would impact flexibility for school divisions. Mr. Robbins explained that school divisions would be receiving additional funds, but may have less flexibility in how they are used.

One Board member requested that the presentation be clearer about whether options are all inclusive, or if one must be chosen from a list.

Board members discussed the provision prohibiting the concentration of effective or ineffective teachers. One Board member asked to remove the restriction on a concentration of effective teachers. Board members asked how effectiveness will be measured for teachers. Dr. Lane explained that the ESSA definition would be used so that it would continue to be aligned if the ESSA definition changes to become associated with evaluation.

One Board member asked what information will be collected regarding how the Equity Funds are used by school divisions. Ms. Webb explained that data collection is something staff will be considering after the SOQ proposals are finalized.

One Board member asked if a division may receive these funds and get no new positions, because they backfill positions. Ms. Webb stated that this could occur in divisions that are already staffing significantly above the SOQ levels. Dr. Lane added that it is likely that these funds will still go towards the initiatives the Board is intending.

Board members discussed the potential effectiveness of the Equity Fund proposal. One Board member expressed concern that the current Equity Fund proposal may fail to create new positions. One Board member expressed support for the Equity Fund proposal as likely to be effective in the divisions that are most in need, if not necessarily in every division. The proposal creates a framework to start a system of equitable distribution. Several Board members expressed support for keeping the Equity Fund ceiling at 70 percent.

Board members discussed the amount of local funds that will be required from high poverty school divisions. Ms. Webb explained that the amount would be different for each division, as some divisions currently fund these positions locally, whereas other divisions may need to put in new funds. Mr. Robbins explained that some of the required local match would be covered by money that school divisions are already expending above the SOQ.

One Board member asked if the Class Size Reduction proposal was divisionwide or school by school. Mr. Robbins clarified that it is school by school.

One Board member asked how adding the K-3 Class Size Reduction to the Equity Fund would impact class size. Mr. Robbins explained that there would be no mechanism to require school divisions to have those smaller class sizes. Dr. Lane stated that permitting the flexibility of the Equity Fund being applied to K-3 Class Size Reduction would allow divisions to increase class sizes, which would be backtracking on work that has been funded by the General Assembly in the past.

One Board member asked what public comments have been received. Ms. Webb stated that many stakeholders expressed a need to maintain flexibility for school divisions. VCEP expressed concern about equitable distribution of teachers, specifically that teacher placement is challenging and targeted compensation may not be able to drive teachers to move. Ms. Webb stated that the language “to the maximum extent possible” was added to convey that no individual teacher should be forced to relocate. Dr. Lane also stated some stakeholders would like the Board to look at a per student multiplier approach, which may be appropriate over the next two years, to be examined for the next SOQ review. Board members requested that staff follow up with stakeholders on the comments received.

Board members discussed the inclusion of third year teachers in the teacher leader and teacher mentor program proposal. Ms. Webb explained that third year teachers were not included because VDOE does not currently collect data on third year teachers. However, data on third year teachers will be available next year. Board members asked for third year teachers to be included, in some way, in anticipation of the data that will be available next year.

## Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.