| **Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item** | **Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia** |
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# Agenda Item: C

## Date: April 26, 2018

### Title: Final Review of the Board of Education’s Guidelines on Exemplar School Recognition as Required by Recognition and Rewards for School and Division Accountability (8VAC20-131-410)

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## Purpose of Presentation:

Action required by Board of Education regulation.

## Executive Summary:

Per 8VAC20-131-410.B, the Board of Education may establish guidelines for the recognition of exemplar performance in schools and divisions. The proposed guidelines identify criteria for three types of recognition: (1) highest achievement, (2) continuous improvement, and (3) innovative practice.

The Board received the proposed guidelines for first review in March 2016. Based on feedback received during first review, the criteria for continuous improvement recognition were changed to substitute an increase in the combined rate for a decrease in the failure rate. Including the combined rate also allows schools and divisions to meet the criteria for continuous improvement through student growth or English Learner (EL) progress, consistent with the new accreditation model. Implementation of the Portrait of a Virginia Graduate and the 5 C’s framework were also added as priority areas for the innovative practice awards.

## Action Requested:

Final review: Action requested at this meeting.

## Superintendent’s Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education approve the proposed guidelines for the recognition of exemplar schools and divisions.

**Rationale for Action:**

Creating new criteria for school recognition that aligns with the philosophy and indicators of the new school accreditation system allows the Department and Board to recognize schools, divisions, and school boards for exemplary performance and the successful implementation of innovative practices.

## Previous Review or Action:

Previous review and action. Specify date and action taken below:

Date March 22, 2018

Action: First Review

## Background Information and Statutory Authority:

The Board of Education’s authority for establishing criteria to recognize schools and divisions for exemplar performance is prescribed in *Regulations Establishing the Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (*8VAC20-131). Section 410.B.* of the regulations states:

B. Schools and divisions may be designated and recognized by the board for exemplar performance in accordance with criteria and guidelines it shall establish for top achievement in one or more school quality indicators, and the board may include recognition for high performing schools in specific peer categories, such as schools with high levels of poverty.

The proposed guidelines establish the criteria for three types of recognition: (1) highest achievement, (2) continuous improvement, and (3) innovative practice.

Schools identified for highest achievement must be rated “Accredited” and demonstrate high levels of success across all of the school quality indicators, including achievement gaps among student groups. To be eligible for this award, schools must meet the state benchmark for reading, math, and science based on the student pass rate (i.e., not including growth or progress) and must have no more than a five percent gap (for schools with two student groups) or a ten percent gap (for schools with three or more student groups) between the lowest performing student group and all other students in the school. In addition, schools must meet the Level One benchmark for all other applicable school quality indicators.

Recognition for continuous improvement values schools that are demonstrating consistent, noteworthy improvement for each of three years. Schools that are rated “Accredited” or “Accredited with Conditions” and meet one of four criteria will be recognized: (1) a ten-point increase in the combination rate (e.g., an increase from 55% to 65%) in reading, math, and science; (2) a ten-point increase in the combination rate in reading and math for two or more student groups; (3) a decrease in the chronic absenteeism rate; or (4) for schools with a graduating class, an increase in the Graduation and Completion Index and a decrease in the dropout rate.

Recognition for highest achievement and continuous improvement will be awarded annually based on current year data and accreditation status. Schools recognized for highest achievement will not be considered for recognition for continuous improvement in the same year.

Under the proposed criteria for innovative practice recognition, the Board can recognize schools, divisions, or school boards that implement an innovative practice for at least two years which demonstrates a significant impact on student success. The innovative practice must be a new or creative evidence-based alternative to existing instructional or administrative practices in one of the following priority areas: (1) closing achievement gaps; (2) developing an integrated STEM approach to learning; (3) building relationships with families; (4) enhancing technology infrastructure; (5) elevating the quality of the school environment; (6) retaining quality teachers, or (7) developing life-ready students through implementation of the *Profile of a Virginia Graduate* and the 5 C’s framework.

## Recognition for innovative practice will be awarded every two years based on an agency-established application process.

Timetable for Further Review/Action:

Every two years beginning in 2020, the Board will review and determine the final list of schools, divisions, or school boards recognized for innovative practice.

## Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:

This responsibility for identifying exemplar schools will be absorbed by the agency’s existing resources.

## Attachment A

### 8VAC20-131-410 Recognitions and rewards for school and division accountability

### Exemplar School Recognition

***8VAC20-131-410.B states:***

*B. Schools and divisions may be designated and recognized by the board for exemplar performance in accordance with criteria and guidelines it shall establish for top achievement in one or more school quality indicators, and the board may include recognition for high performing schools in specific peer categories, such as schools with high levels of poverty.*

#### Guidance:

These guidelines establish the Board’s criteria to designate schools that have achieved exemplar performance based upon the school quality indicators used for accreditation. Three categories of exemplar performance will be recognized: (1) Highest achievement, (2) Continuous improvement; and (3) Innovative practice.

#### Highest Achievement:

Eligibility for recognition for highest achievement is limited to schools rated “Accredited” during the most current accreditation cycle. Schools that meet *all* of the following criteria will be recognized for highest achievement:

•   School meets state benchmark in reading, math *and* science (75 percent for reading and 70 percent for math and science) based on the current year pass rate on state assessments (not including growth or English Learner progress);

•   All student groups within school meet state benchmark in reading *and* math (75 percent for reading and 70 percent for math) based on the current year pass rate on state assessments (not including growth or English Learner progress), *and*

* For schools with two student groups, there is no more than five percentage points between the lowest performing group and all other students in the school; or
* For schools with three or more student groups, there is no more than ten percentage points between the lowest performing group and all other students in the school

•   School demonstrates current year chronic absenteeism rate of 15 percent or lower.

For schools with a graduating class, two additional criteria apply:

•   School demonstrates current year Graduation and Completion Index of 88 points or higher;

•   School demonstrates current year dropout rate of six percent or lower.

#### Continuous Improvement:

Eligibility for recognition for continuous improvement is open to all accreditation-eligible schools that do not receive recognition for high achievement in the same year. Schools rated as “Accredited” or “Accredited with Conditions” and meet *at least one* of the following criteria will be recognized annually for continuous improvement:

* School demonstrates an increase in the combined rate for math, reading *and* science for each of the past three years, with a total increase across the three years of ten points or more;
* School demonstrates an increase in the combined rate for two or more student groups in reading *and* math for each of the past three years, with a total increase across the three years of ten points or more ;
* School demonstrates a decrease in the chronic absenteeism rate for each of the past three years, with a total reduction across the three years of 15 percent or more of the first year’s chronic absenteeism rate;
* School demonstrates an increase in the Graduation and Completion Index (GCI) for each of the past three years, with a total increase across the three years of four percent or more; *and* school demonstrates a decrease in the dropout rate for each of the past three years, with the total reduction across three years of 15 percent or more of the first year’s dropout rate.

#### Innovative Practice:

Eligibility for recognition for an innovative practice is open to all accreditation-eligible schools, any school division, and any local school board. Schools, divisions, and school boards will be recognized every two years for innovative practices based upon the following criteria:

* School- or division-wide implementation of a new or creative evidence-based alternative to existing instructional or administrative practices in a defined student population
* Practice must be implemented for at least two full academic years
* Goals and objectives for practice must align with one of the following priority areas:
  + Closing achievement gaps among vulnerable and/or minority student groups
  + Developing an integrated STEM approach to learning
  + Building genuine relationships with families to support overall family well-being and children’s healthy development
  + Enhancing technology infrastructure to increases students access to connected devices and the internet
  + Elevating the quality and character of the school environment so that it the reflects the positive and support norms, goals, and values of the community
  + Retaining high-quality teachers
  + Developing life-ready students through implementation of the *Profile of a Virginia Graduate* and the 5 C’s framework (skills in critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship)
* Data provided by school or division demonstrates practice is meeting its objectives and is having a significant impact on outcomes for the targeted student population

Innovative practice recognition will be awarded through an agency-established application process. Schools, divisions, or school boards will self-nominate and submit applications to their Regional Superintendent designee. Regional Superintendents will review each application and submit a subset of finalists to the Board for consideration. Board members will rate each application received against a rubric and those scoring above a pre-determined range will be recognized.

Schools, divisions, and school boards recognized in any of the three categories of exemplar performance will be listed in the Superintendent’s Annual Report and on the Virginia Department of Education website. Other incentives may be provided as resources allow.