



Virginia Board of Education

Highlights of the Standards of Quality

The Foundation of K-12 Public Policy in Virginia: The Standards of Quality

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Constitutional Authority

“The General Assembly shall provide for a system of free public elementary and secondary schools for all children of school age throughout the Commonwealth and shall seek to ensure that an educational program of high quality is established and continually maintained.”

Virginia Constitution, Article VIII, § 1



Constitutional Authority

“Standards of quality for the several school divisions shall be determined and prescribed from time to time by the Board of Education, subject to revision only by the General Assembly.”

Article VIII, § 2, Constitution of Virginia



Statutory Considerations

“By November 15 of each year, the Board of Education shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly a report on the condition and needs of public education in the Commonwealth and shall identify any school divisions and the specific schools therein which have failed to establish and maintain schools meeting the existing prescribed standards of quality. Such standards of quality shall be subject to revision only by the General Assembly, pursuant to Article VIII, Section 2 of the Constitution of Virginia...”

§ 22.1-18, Code of Virginia



Statutory Considerations

“To ensure the integrity of the standards of quality, the Board of Education shall, in even-numbered years, exercise its constitutional authority to determine and prescribe the standards, subject to revision only by the General Assembly, by reviewing the standards and either (i) proposing amendments to the standards or (ii) making a determination that no changes are necessary...”

§ 22.1-18.01, Code of Virginia



Major Stakeholders

- **Governor**
- **General Assembly**
- **Board of Education**
- **Superintendent of Public Instruction and DOE staff**
- **Local school boards**
- **Local superintendents and staff**
- **Parents**
- **Students**
- **Education organizations**
- **Public**



Nine Standards of Quality

§§ 22.1-253.13:1 through 22.1-253.13:9, Code of Virginia

1. Instructional programs supporting the Standards of Learning and other educational objectives;
2. Instructional, administrative, and support personnel;
3. Accreditation, other standards and evaluation;
4. Student achievement and graduation requirements;
5. Quality of classroom instruction and educational leadership;
6. Planning and public involvement;
7. School board policies;
8. Compliance; and
9. Virginia Index of Performance incentive program.



Standard One: Instructional Programs

- Requires the Board of Education to establish educational objectives in all subjects, known as the Standards of Learning (SOL);
- Requires local school boards to implement a program of instruction that meets or exceeds the requirements of the Board of Education;
- Sets out the areas of instruction that must be emphasized by local school divisions, including reading, writing, mathematics, science, history, geography, government, economics, foreign languages, health and physical education, fine arts, and practical arts;



Standard One: Instructional Programs

- Sets out the programs that must be implemented by local school divisions, including special education, career and technical education, gifted education, and programs for students with limited English proficiency;
- Requires local school boards to adopt a curriculum aligned to the Standards of Learning;
- Requires local school boards to develop and implement programs of prevention, intervention, or remediation for students who are educationally at risk; and
- Requires local school boards to collect and analyze data, and use the results to evaluate and make decisions about instructional programs.



Standard Two: Staffing

- Requires local school boards to employ licensed instructional personnel qualified in relevant subject areas;
- Sets divisionwide ratios of students to teachers for elementary, middle and high school;
- Sets schoolwide ratios of students to teachers for middle schools and high schools;
- Requires local school boards to provide support services;
- Sets minimum staffing requirements for principals, assistant principals, librarians, school counselors, and clerical personnel.



Standard Three: Accreditation

- Requires the Board to establish Standards of Accreditation;
- Requires full accreditation of all schools within a school division;
- Requires local school boards to review the accreditation status of all schools annually in public session;
- Establishes an academic review process and sets the requirements for corrective action plans for any schools that have been rated Accredited with Warning;
- Provides for a division level academic review and sets requirements for corrective action plans for school divisions that have undergone a division-level academic review;



Standard Three: Accreditation

- Requires the Board to prescribe end-of-course and end-of-grade Standards of Learning assessments for English, mathematics, science, and history and social science;
- Authorizes the Board to pursue all civil remedies for breaches in test security and unauthorized alteration of test materials or test results;
- Requires local school boards to use Standards of Learning assessments and other relevant data to evaluate student progress and determine educational performance; and
- Provides for the Board to prescribe requirements for the School Performance Report Card.



Standard Four: Student Achievement

- Specifies that the Board of Education establishes graduation requirements, setting the units of credit to be earned and prescribing the assessments to be passed;
- Requires reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities to meet the requirements to be awarded a diploma;
- Provides for the establishment of Standard, Advanced Studies, and Special Diplomas, as well as Certificates of Program Completion;



Standard Four: Student Achievement

- Provides for the award of verified credits for passing scores on industry certifications, state licensure examinations, and national occupational competency assessments approved by the Board; and
- Requires local school divisions to report annually to the Board on the number of industry certifications and state licensure examinations passed, and to post these numbers on the School Performance Report Card.



Standard Five: Educational Leadership

- Sets requirements for teacher, administrator, and superintendent evaluations;
- Prescribes professional development requirements for local school board members and superintendents;
- Requires local school boards to provide a program of high quality professional development to instructional personnel in instructional content;
- Requires all instructional personnel to participate in such programs;



Standard Five: Educational Leadership

- Requires the inclusion of high-quality professional development programs in schools' and school divisions' comprehensive plans; and
- Requires each local school board to review its professional development program annually.



Standard Six: Planning & Public Involvement

- Sets standards for statewide and divisionwide comprehensive, unified, long-range plans;
- Requires that the comprehensive plans be developed with staff and community involvement;
- Requires the Board of Education and local school boards to report to the public the extent to which the objectives of the plan have been met;
- Requires each school to prepare its own comprehensive plan;



Standard Six: Planning & Public Involvement

- Requires that the plans be based on data collection, analysis, and evaluation;
- Requires the plans to include strategies for improving student achievement;
- Requires that local school divisions' plans are consistent with all other divisionwide plans required by law and regulations; and
- Requires the local school divisions' plans include provisions for parent and family involvement.



Standard Seven: School Board Policies

- Requires each school board to maintain and follow an up-to-date policy manual that is made available to the public;
- Prescribes the components of the policy manual and requires that it be developed giving consideration to the views of teachers, parents, and other concerned citizens; and
- Requires local school boards to provide notice annually of the availability of the policy manual, and to ensure that copies are available for review.



Standard Eight: Compliance

- Requires local school boards to provide, as a minimum, the programs and services, set forth in the SOQ, with state and local funds as apportioned by the General Assembly;
- Requires each local school board to report its compliance with the SOQ to the Board annually;
- Requires the Board to identify, in its report to the Governor and General Assembly, any school divisions that failed to meet the SOQ; and
- Authorizes the Board to enforce compliance with the SOQ.



Standard Nine: Virginia Index of Performance Incentive Program

- Provides for schools and school divisions to be recognized and rewarded for being fully accredited and for making significant progress in achieving advanced proficiency levels in English, mathematics, science, and history and social science;
- Encourages school divisions to promote student achievement in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; and
- Permits a school that maintains a passing rate on Virginia assessment program tests of 95 percent or above in each of the four core academic areas for two consecutive years to receive a waiver from annual accreditation.