

Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item



Agenda Item: J **Date:** September 22, 2016

Title	First Review of Recommendations to Revise the Standards of Quality		
Presenter	Dr. Cynthia A. Cave, Assistant Superintendent for Policy and Communications		
E-mail	Cynthia.Cave@doe.virginia.gov	Phone	(804) 225-2092

Purpose of Presentation:

Action required by state or federal law or regulation.

Previous Review or Action:

No previous review or action.

Action Requested:

Action will be requested at a future meeting. Specify anticipated date below:

Date: October 27, 2016

Action: Final review and approval

Alignment with Board of Education Goals: Please indicate (X) all that apply:

X	Goal 1: Accountability for Student Learning
X	Goal 2: Rigorous Standards to Promote College and Career Readiness
X	Goal 3: Expanded Opportunities to Learn
X	Goal 4: Nurturing Young Learners
X	Goal 5: Highly Qualified and Effective Educators
X	Goal 6: Sound Policies for Student Success
X	Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools
	Other Priority or Initiative. Specify:

Background Information and Statutory Authority:

The Standards of Quality are the foundational program for public education in Virginia. The review of the Standards of Quality addresses all seven of the Board of Education’s goals. This review has resulted in recommendations that address four major policy areas which align with the Board’s goals as follows:

- Planning for proposed student preparation and accountability system changes. (Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6)
- Building capacity by recognizing local staffing practices that exceed the state’s staffing standards. (Goals 1, 5, and 6)
- Ensuring a minimum floor level of quality support and instruction is available for all students. (Goals 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7)
- Improving the efficiency of the SOQ review process. (Goals 1 and 6)

Article VIII, § 2 of the *Constitution of Virginia* requires the Board of Education to determine and prescribe Standards of Quality for the public schools in Virginia. The *Constitution* states:

“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. The General Assembly shall determine the manner in which funds are to be provided for the cost of maintaining an educational program meeting the prescribed standards of quality, and shall provide for the apportionment of the cost of such program between the Commonwealth and the local units of government comprising such school divisions. Each unit of local government shall provide its portion of such cost by local taxes or from other available funds.”

The *Code of Virginia* requires the Board of Education to review the Standards of Quality every two years. Section 22.1-18.01 of the *Code* says, in part:

“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....”

The *Code* also requires that the Board’s annual report to the Governor and General Assembly include any recommendations for revisions to the Standards of Quality. Section 22.1-18 of the *Code* says, in part:

“...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 that 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. Such report shall include...[a] complete listing of the current standards of quality for the Commonwealth's public schools, together with a justification for each particular standard, how long each such standard has been in its current form, and whether the Board recommends any change or addition to the standards of quality...”

On August 7, 1971, the Board of Education adopted the first Standards of Quality (SOQ). They were revised by the General Assembly in 1972 and adopted as uncodified Acts of Assembly. In 1974, they were revised into eight standards. In 1984, they were codified by the General Assembly, and in 1988 they were arranged into their current format.

The Board of Education revised its bylaws in October 2001 to require the Board to “determine the need for a review of the SOQ from time to time but no less than once every two years. The Standing Committee on the Standards of Quality was created by resolution of the Board of Education in November 2001 and held its first meeting in January 2002. It completed its work on its first set of recommendations in June 2003 for consideration by the 2004 General Assembly.

The Board’s Standing Committee on the Standards of Quality commenced this review of the SOQ with a meeting on October 2015, and subsequently met each month from January through July 2016. The public also could provide comment at each of these meetings.

During the months of July and August 2016, the Board has held four public hearings to solicit comments from the public on revisions to the Standards of Quality. These public hearings also were intended to gather comments on the conditions and needs of public education, the Profile of a Virginia Graduate and high school redesign, and the development of the state’s Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan. These hearings were held in Abingdon, Lynchburg, Manassas, and Williamsburg. Throughout the Board’s review of the SOQ, several organizations provided comments, including the Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analytics, the Virginia Association of Counties, the Virginia Association of School Librarians, the Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS), , the Virginia Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Virginia Association of School Librarians, the Virginia Association of School Nurses, the Virginia Education Association, the Virginia Municipal League, and the Virginia School Counselor Association.

Summary of Important Issues: Based on public comment received to date, and consistent with the Board’s goals, the following proposed revisions the Standards of Quality are recommended:

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

Proposed changes to Standard 1. Instructional programs supporting the Standards of Learning and other educational objectives.

- **Establishing Awareness of Available Pathways**

- Background. Standard One currently requires school divisions to implement plans to notify students and parents of opportunities for dual enrollment, Advanced Placement class, International Baccalaureate, and Academic Year Governor’s School Programs. There is no corresponding requirement for students and parents to be notified of other opportunities that are geared toward career readiness, such as internships or externships, or other work-based learning experiences.
- Recommendation. Given the Board’s current work that will revise high school graduation requirements to include multiple pathways toward college and career readiness, including opportunities for internships, externships and credentialing, it would be appropriate to ensure that notice of opportunities for career and technical education is afforded to all students, and provided in the *Code of Virginia*.
- Proposed Language.

§ 22.1-253.13:1. Standard 1. Instructional programs supporting the Standards of Learning and other educational objectives.

D. Local school boards shall also implement the following:

11. A plan to notify students and their parents of the availability of dual enrollment and advanced placement classes, the International Baccalaureate Program, and Academic Year Governor's School Programs, and career and technical education programs, the qualifications for enrolling in such classes and programs, and the availability of financial assistance to low-income and needy students to take the advanced placement and International Baccalaureate examinations. This plan shall include notification to students and parents of the

agreement with a community college in the Commonwealth to enable students to complete an associate's degree or a one-year Uniform Certificate of General Studies concurrent with a high school diploma.

Proposed changes to Standard 2. Instructional, administrative, and support personnel.

• **Assistant Principals**

- **Background.** Standard Two currently requires school divisions to employ assistant principals as follows:
 - Elementary Schools
 - Up to 599 students: none
 - 600 to 899 students: one half-time assistant principal
 - 900 or more students: one full-time assistant principal
 - Middle and High Schools
 - Up to 599 students: none
 - One full-time assistant principal for each 600 students
 - School divisions must meet these requirements on a division-wide basis and may assign assistant principals to schools according to area of greatest need, regardless of whether such school is an elementary, middle, or high school.

As a result of these requirements, in FY 2015, local school divisions were allocated state funding for 924 assistant principal positions. In that same year, school divisions filled 2,554 assistant principal positions, therefore only about one third of those positions were funded with SOQ funds.

Support for increasing the SOQ staffing ratio for assistant principals was expressed by individuals at the public hearings, and through a letter submitted by VASS.

Since 2003, the Board of Education has recommended the General Assembly increase the assistant principal staffing standard to require one assistant principal for every 400 students.

- **Recommendation.** Because school division staffing practices result in more than double the number of assistant principals than are required by the SOQ, the staffing ratio should be adjusted to ensure that state fiscal support is provided. Therefore, one full-time assistant principal should be provided for each 400 students.
- **Proposed Language.**

§ 22.1-253.13:2. Standard 2. Instructional, administrative, and support personnel.

H. Each local school board shall employ, at a minimum, the following full-time equivalent positions for any school that reports fall membership, according to the type of school and student enrollment:

2. Assistant principals in elementary schools, ~~one half-time at 600 students,~~ one

full-time at ~~900~~ 400 students; assistant principals in middle schools, one full-time for each ~~600~~ 400 students; assistant principals in high schools, one full-time for each ~~600~~ 400 students; and school divisions that employ a sufficient number of assistant principals to meet this staffing requirement may assign assistant principals to schools within the division according to the area of greatest need, regardless of whether such schools are elementary, middle, or secondary;

- **Elementary School Principals**

- Background. Standard Two currently requires school divisions to employ a full-time principal in all schools, except for elementary schools with 299 or fewer students, which are only required to employ a half-time principal.

Based on Fall 2015 membership counts, Virginia has approximately 1,150 elementary schools, of which 153 have fewer than 299 students. Ninety-nine (65%) of those schools have between 200 and 299 students. These small elementary schools tend to be concentrated in Virginia's least densely populated counties, where consolidating schools is not feasible due to lengthy travel times. In practice, there appear to only be four instances where a school division has required a principal to split his or her time between two small elementary schools, despite there being 153 schools with 299 or fewer students.

In FY 2015, school divisions were allocated state funding for 1,756 principal positions, and in that same year, divisions reported filling 1,927 principal positions, a difference of 171 positions, which is nearly the number of elementary schools with less than 299 students.

VASS has expressed support for one 12-month principal position to be provided in every elementary school.

Since 2003, the Board of Education has recommended the General Assembly provide one principal in each elementary school.

- Recommendation. Because so few school divisions have chosen to utilize part-time elementary school principals, providing effective leadership to two schools that may be distant from one another appears to be infeasible, and the staffing requirement should be adjusted to reflect actual practice.
- Proposed Language.

§ 22.1-253.13:2. Standard 2. Instructional, administrative, and support personnel.

H. Each local school board shall employ, at a minimum, the following full-time equivalent positions for any school that reports fall membership, according to the type of school and student enrollment:

1. Principals in elementary schools, ~~one half-time to 299 students,~~ one full-time, to be employed on a 12-month basis at 300 students; principals in middle schools, one full-time, to be employed on a 12-month basis; principals in high schools, one full-time, to be employed on a 12-month basis;

- **School Counselors**

- **Background.** Standard Two of the Standards of Quality (SOQ) currently requires school divisions to employ counselors as follows:
 - Elementary Schools
 - One hour per day per 100 students
 - One full-time at 500 students
 - One hour per day additional time per 100 students or major fraction thereof
 - Middle Schools
 - One period per 80 students
 - One full-time at 400 students
 - One additional period per 80 students or major fraction thereof
 - High Schools
 - One period per 70 students
 - One full-time at 350 students
 - One additional period per 70 students or major fraction thereof
 - School divisions must meet these requirements on a division-wide basis and may assign counselors to schools according to area of greatest need, regardless of whether such school is an elementary, middle, or high school.

The Virginia School Counselors Association indicated that duties assigned to school counselors have begun to shift toward non-counseling related roles such as attendance, testing, clerical, and social work. Counselors also have taken on additional duties as requirements for academic and career plans have been implemented in recent years, and expanded work is anticipated as a result of the implementation of the Profile of a Virginia Graduate. At the public hearings, several individuals commented on the need to lower the counselor to student ratio provided in the SOQ.

Based on FY2015, there was approximately one counselor for every 329 students in Virginia, while the SOQ standards required only approximately one counselor for every 425 students. The American School Counselor Association's publication [*The Role of the School Counselor*](#) recommends a ratio of one counselor to every 250 students.

- **Recommendation.** Because additional demands have been placed on counselors, and need for counselor support is anticipated to increase due to future changes in Virginia schools, the student to staff ratio for counselors should be adjusted to one counselor to every 250 students.
- **Proposed Language.**

§ 22.1-253.13:2. Standard 2. Instructional, administrative, and support personnel.

H. Each local school board shall employ, at a minimum, the following full-time equivalent positions for any school that reports fall membership, according to the type of school and student enrollment:

~~4. Guidance counselors in elementary schools, one hour per day per 100 students, one full time at 500 students, one hour per day additional time per 100 students or major fraction thereof; guidance counselors in middle schools, one period per 80 students, one full time at 400 students, one additional period per 80 students or major fraction thereof; guidance counselors in high schools, one period per 70 students, one full time at 350 students, one additional period per 70 students or major fraction thereof. Local school divisions that employ a sufficient number of guidance counselors to meet this staffing requirement may assign guidance counselors to schools within the division according to the area of greatest need, regardless of whether such schools are elementary, middle, or secondary.~~

K. Local school boards shall employ one full-time equivalent school counselor position per 250 students in grades kindergarten through 12.

- **Staffing Standards for Psychologists, Social Workers, and School Nurses**

- Background. Although state assistance is provided, there are no minimum staffing levels for support services positions, which includes positions ranging from those that provide direct student support to those that maintain school facilities. Local school boards have the discretion to fill these positions as they deem necessary. The minimum SOQ staffing standards currently are focused on instructional personnel needs and do not address positions that provide social, emotional, and physical supports to students and families. Recent significant increases in economically disadvantaged students, English language learners, and students receiving special education services underscore the need for school divisions to provide these supports.

Currently, there is limited data on the number of social workers, school psychologists, and school nurses employed by each school division due to inconsistent reporting among school divisions. The estimated ratios of these positions, based upon FY2015 data is:

- School psychologists: One position per approximately 1500 to 1900 students
- School social workers: One position per approximately 1600 students
- School nurses: One position per approximately 600 students

The National Association of Social Workers in 2012 published its [*NASW Standards for School Social Work Services*](#), which recommends a staff to student ratio of one to 50 to one to 250, depending on level of services needed.

The National Association of School Nurses in 2015 published its [*School Nurse Workload: Staffing for Safe Care*](#), which does not recommend a specific staffing ratio, but rather an approach that considers student and community needs. This document also acknowledges that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' recommended ratio of one school nurse for every 750 students. It should be noted that this exceeds the estimated ratio reported above for FY 2015.

The National Association of School Psychologists in 2010 published its [*Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services*](#), which generally recommends a ratio of one psychologist per 1,000 students; with even lower ratios recommended when more intensive services are needed.

Individuals at the public hearings commented on the need to increase the number of each of these staff positions available, especially for students who do not have access to the services outside of the school system. The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analytics indicated that funding to serve at-risk populations lags behind that of other states. Ensuring access to these positions is one method by which the commonwealth could increase its contribution to serving at-risk students.

- Recommendation. A minimum level of staffing should be provided for social worker, psychologist and school nurse positions to ensure that all students may access these services. This would involve moving these positions from the support service positions category to a prescribed ratio in the Standards of Quality.
- Proposed Language.

§ 22.1-253.13:2. Standard 2. Instructional, administrative, and support personnel.

K. Local school boards shall employ one full-time equivalent school nurse position per 550 students in grades kindergarten through 12.

L. Local school boards shall employ one full-time equivalent school psychologist position per 1,000 students in grades kindergarten through 12.

M. Local school boards shall employ one full-time equivalent school social worker position per 1,000 students in grades kindergarten through 12.

O. Each local school board shall provide those support services that are necessary for the efficient and cost-effective operation and maintenance of its public schools.

For the purposes of this title, unless the context otherwise requires, "support services positions" shall include the following:

3. Student support positions, including (i) ~~social workers and~~ social work administrative positions; (ii) guidance administrative positions not included in subdivision H 4; (iii) homebound administrative positions supporting instruction; (iv) attendance support positions related to truancy and dropout prevention; and (v) health and behavioral positions, ~~including other than~~ school nurses and school psychologists;

Proposed changes to the Appropriation Act related to the Standards of Quality.

- **Recession Era Waivers**

- Background. In 2010, the General Assembly added language to the Appropriation Act to override certain staffing standards in Standard Two that:
 - Permitted school divisions to increase teacher to pupil staffing ratios in kindergarten through grade 7, and in English classes for grades 6 through 12 by one additional student.

- Waived teacher to pupil staffing ratios for:
 - Elementary resource teachers
 - Prevention, intervention, and remediation teachers
 - English as a second language teachers
 - Gifted and talented teachers
 - Career and technical funded programs (unless federal Occupational Safety & Health Administration safety requirements impose a maximum class size)
 - Instructional and support technology positions (new hires only)
 - Librarians (new hires only)
 - Guidance counselors (new hires only)

These waivers were implemented during the recession to provide school divisions with temporary staffing flexibility by increasing pupil staffing ratios and eliminating staffing requirements in certain disciplines. School divisions choosing to utilize these provisions in lieu of providing the SOQ-prescribed positions may do so with no loss of state funding.

There is limited data on how school divisions are utilizing these waivers. As part of the SOQ compliance data collection, school divisions are asked if they are using any of these provisions, but are not asked specifically how they are utilizing the waivers. In the 2015-2016 school year, 53 school divisions claimed that they were utilizing the waivers.

VASS submitted a letter maintaining that school divisions need additional staffing flexibility, rather than a single statewide standard, especially as the revised high school graduation requirements emerge. The organization also suggests developing alternative processes for school divisions to implement innovative staffing practices that may be out of alignment with the existing SOQ.

- Recommendation. Because the SOQ was established to ensure a minimum level of quality among school divisions in the commonwealth, these provisions should be eliminated to ensure that these positions are provided. The need for flexible staffing standards should be addressed comprehensively through ongoing dialogue with VASS, findings based on high school redesign efforts, and the recommendations of the General Assembly's Joint Committee to Study the Future of Public Elementary and Secondary Education (H.J. 112, S.J. 85, 2016).
- Proposed Legislative Action. To implement this, Item 139 A.17 of the 2016-2018 Appropriation Act should be stricken.

- **Support Position Cap**

- Background. The SOQ requires school divisions to provide support services positions as deemed necessary by each school board for the efficient and cost-effective operation and maintenance of its public schools. This category of positions includes: superintendents, school board members, central office personnel, social workers, psychologists, nurses, attendance staff, clerical, maintenance, security, and school transportation staff, and others. Prior to 2009, SOQ funds were provided for these positions based upon the prevailing per-pupil rates that school divisions were filling these positions.

In 2009, the General Assembly amended the method of funding these positions by limiting the number of positions at 1 support position per 4.03 instructional positions, excluding the positions of division superintendent, school board, school nurse, and school transportation positions. This revised methodology, initially implemented as a cost-cutting measure during the economic downturn, and does not reflect the actual prevailing ratios of support staff that is provided by school divisions.

Throughout the public hearings, the need for additional fiscal resources was a predominant theme. Many individuals and organizations, including the Virginia Association of Counties and the Virginia Municipal League, have noted that education funding in Virginia after the recession has not returned to 2008 levels.

- Recommendation. Because support services positions are essential to the effective operation of schools, and provide vital support to instructional staff, the General Assembly should return to its prior practice of funding support services to school divisions based upon actual local school division practices.
- Proposed Legislative Action. To implement this, Item 139 C.5.k of the 2016-2018 Appropriation Act should be stricken.

Other recommended actions.

- **Adjust SOQ Review Cycle**

- Background. Section 22.1-18.01 of the *Code of Virginia* establishes that the Board's SOQ recommendations be made in even-numbered years. If these recommendations were made in odd-numbered years, they could be developed in concert with the Governor's biennial budget process, whereby the Governor's budget is introduced in December of odd-numbered years.
- Recommendation. Propose legislation to shift the review of the SOQ from even to odd-numbered years to be aligned more effectively with the legislative budget process.
- Proposed Language.

§ 22.1-18.01. Biennial review of the standards of quality required; budget estimates.

A. To ensure the integrity of the standards of quality, the Board of Education shall, in ~~even-numbered~~ odd-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.

B. In any ~~odd-numbered~~ even-numbered year following the year in which the Board proposes changes to the standards of quality, the budget estimates that are required to be reported pursuant to § 2.2-1504 shall take into consideration the Board's proposed standards of quality.

- **Data availability for SOQ position assignments**

- Background. During the SOQ Committee’s deliberations, staffing standards for special education, career and technical education staffing, and English as a Second Language staffing were discussed as areas for further focus. There are limitations on the data collected regarding the local assignment of these positions, therefore it would be inappropriate to make a staffing recommendation at this time. In lieu of making actual recommendations, a more in depth study should be conducted to determine data needs to examine how local school divisions are allocating staff.
- Recommendation. Propose an in-depth study be conducted to ensure that adequate data is available regarding the local deployment of SOQ positions.

- **Other key issues raised during public hearings**

Throughout the public hearing process, several individuals and organizations stressed the need for additional resources for professional development and librarians. With the implementation of the expectations of the Profile of a Virginia Graduate, specific needs for professional development and librarians can be identified and examined through future SOQ reviews.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Propose legislation to amend the *Code of Virginia* to ensure that students and parents are made aware of career and technical education opportunities.
- Require one full-time assistant principal for every 400 students in grades K-12.
- Require one full-time principal in every elementary school.
- Require one school counselor for every 250 students in grades K-12.
- Require one full-time school psychologist for every 1,000 students.
- Require one full-time social worker for every 1,000 students.
- Require one full-time school nurse for every 550 students.
- Eliminate the flexibility provisions established in the Appropriation Act that waives or override certain staff to student ratios that are established in the Standards of Quality.
- Eliminate the methodology established in the Appropriation Act that artificially caps the number of state-funded support positions at 1 support position for every 4.03 instructional positions.
- Propose legislation to shift the review of the SOQ from even to odd-numbered years to be aligned more effectively with the legislative budget process.
- Propose an in-depth study be conducted to ensure that adequate data is available regarding the local deployment of SOQ positions.

Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:

The additional state cost to implement the staffing recommendations is estimated to be:

Recommended Staffing Changes	FY 2017	FY 2018
Assistant Principal: One for every 400 students	\$69.4 million	\$71.4 million
Principal: One full-time in every elementary school	\$6.8 million	\$6.8 million
School Counselor: One for every 250 students	\$80.0 million	\$82.4 million
School Psychologist: One for every 1,000 students	[forthcoming]	[forthcoming]
School Social Worker: One for every 1,000 students	[forthcoming]	[forthcoming]
School Nurse: One for every 550 students	\$1.6 million	\$1.8 million
Eliminate the cap on funded support positions	\$332.5 million	\$339.6 million

Timetable for Further Review/Action:

The final review is planned for the October 27, 2016 meeting.

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board accept for first review the proposed revisions to the Standards of Quality.

Recommendations to Revise the Standards of Quality (SOQ)

Dr. Cynthia A. Cave
Assistant Superintendent for Policy and Communications

Virginia Board of Education
Committee on the Standards of Quality
September 21, 2016



Public Outreach

- *SOQ Committee began meeting in October 2015*
- *Four statewide public hearings during July-August 2016*
- *Comments received from several individuals and statewide organizations*

Areas of Need Identified

- **Planned student preparation and accountability system changes**
- **Local staffing practices that exceed the state's staffing standards**
- **Minimum floor level of support and instruction should be available for all students**
- **SOQ review process efficiency improvements**



**Proposed changes to Standard 1:
Instructional programs supporting the
Standards of Learning and other
educational objectives**



Awareness of Available Pathways

- Currently, schools are required to have a plan to notify parents and students of AP, IB, and Governor's school opportunities.
- No corresponding requirement exists for notice of career and technical opportunities.
- Recommendation: Propose legislation to ensure that students and parents are made aware of career and technical education opportunities.



Proposed changes to Standard 2: Instructional, administrative, and support personnel



Assistant Principals

- SOQ provides for assistant principal positions as follows:

School	Staffing Requirement
Elementary	600-899 students: half-time 900 or more students: one full-time
Middle and High	1 full-time per 600 students

School divisions are required to meet this requirement on a division-wide basis and may assign assistant principals to schools according to area of greatest need, regardless of whether such school is elementary, middle, or high.



Assistant Principals

- During FY 15:
 - There were 924 SOQ-recognized assistant principal positions.
 - School divisions filled 2,554 assistant principal positions.
- Recommendation: Adjust the staffing requirement to provide one assistant principal for each 400 students.



Elementary School Principals

- SOQ provides for a full-time principal in every school, except for elementary schools with 299 or fewer students. The SOQ provides for a half-time principal in these schools.
- About 13 percent of elementary schools have 299 or fewer students; however, very few school divisions split principals between schools.
- Recommendation: Adjust the staffing requirement to provide one 12 month principal position for each elementary school.



School Counselors

- SOQ provides for school counselor positions as follows:

School	Staffing Requirement
Elementary	One hour per day per 100 students; one full-time at 500 students; and one hour per day additional time per 100 students or major fraction thereof
Middle	One period per 80 students; one full-time at 400 students; one additional period per 80 students or major fraction thereof
High	One period per 70 students; one full-time at 350 students; one additional period per 70 students or major fraction thereof

School divisions are required to meet this requirement on a division-wide basis and may assign guidance counselors to schools according to area of greatest need, regardless of whether such school is elementary, middle, or high.



School Counselors

- School counselor roles have been shifting to non-counseling related roles.
- Expanded career exploration, and academic and career planning will expand time requirements with students.
- American School Counselor Association recommends one counselor per 250 students.



School Counselors

- During FY 15:
 - Counselor positions were funded statewide at one counselor per 425 students.
 - School divisions provided counselors at approximately one counselor per 329 students.
- Recommendation: Adjust the staffing requirement to provide one school counselor for each 250 students.



Psychologists, Social Workers, Nurses

- SOQ does not establish minimum staffing levels for these positions –
 - They are classified as support services positions, which includes a wide range of positions, including bus drivers, maintenance workers, central office staff.
 - Funds are provided for these positions based upon prevailing statewide staffing practices; however, they can be filled at the discretion of the school division.



Psychologists, Social Workers, Nurses

- During FY 15, school divisions employed:
 - School psychologists at one position per approximately 1500 to 1900 students.
 - School social workers at one position per approximately 1600 students.
 - School nurses at one position per approximately 600 students.



Psychologists, Social Workers, Nurses

- Recommendation: Remove school psychologists, social workers, and nurses from the support services position category and provide a prescribed ratio in the SOQ, as follows:
 - School psychologists at one position per 1,000 students.
 - School social workers at one position per 1,000 students.
 - School nurses at one position per approximately 550 students.



Proposed changes to the Appropriation Act related to the Standards of Quality



Recession Era Waivers

- Since 2010, the General Assembly has:
 - Permitted school divisions to increase teacher to pupil ratios by one student for grades K-7 and in English classes for grades 6-12
 - Fully waived SOQ staffing requirements for:
 - Elementary resource teachers
 - Prevention, Intervention, and Remediation positions
 - English as a Second Language Teachers
 - Gifted Teachers
 - Career & Technical Teachers (unless OSHA prescribes a maximum class size)
 - Guidance counselors (new hires only)
 - Librarians (new hires only)
 - Technology Instruction and Support positions (new hires only)



Recession Era Waivers

- These waivers were implemented during the recession to provide temporary staffing flexibility with no loss of state funding.
- Limited data is available to show how the waivers are utilized.
- Recommendation: Eliminate these waivers to ensure that a minimum level of quality instruction is provided statewide. Additional need for flexibility should be addressed comprehensively in the future.



Support Services Position Cap

- Support services positions include: central office staff, social workers, psychologists, nurses, and attendance, clerical, security, and transportation staff, and others.
- Beginning in 2009, the General Assembly capped the number of funded support services positions at 1 position per 4.03 instructional positions.
- Prior to this action, funds were provided for support services positions based upon the prevailing per-pupil rates that school divisions were staffing these positions.



Support Services Position Cap

- Comments during the public hearings clearly indicated a need for additional fiscal resources, noting that per-pupil funding still lags behind pre-recession levels.
- Recommendation: Eliminate the support position cap, and return to the funding methodology utilized before 2009.



Other Recommended Actions



Adjust SOQ Review Cycle

- *Va. Code* § 22.1-18.01 requires the Board to review and recommend changes to the SOQ in even-numbered years.
- The Governor's introduced budget is developed in odd-numbered years, and released in December.
- Recommendation: Amend § 22.1-18.01 so that the Board's SOQ review would occur in odd-numbered years, concurrent with the Governor's budget process.



Data for SOQ Position Assignments

- Staffing standards for special education, career and technical education, and English as a Second Language were discussed as potential areas for the Board to focus during the SOQ review.
- Staff found that there is very limited data on how local school divisions are deploying these positions.
- Recommendation: Study in-depth to determine data needs regarding deployment of SOQ positions.



Other issues raised

- Several comments were received regarding resources needed for professional development and librarians.
- Expectations for Profile of a Graduate implementation must first be identified before specific needs can be identified for these areas.
- Future SOQ reviews should consider these comments.



Fiscal Impacts



Fiscal Impact of Staffing Recommendations

Recommended Changes	FY 2017	FY 2018
Assistant Principal: One per 400 students	\$69.4 million	\$71.4 million
Principal: One full-time in each elementary school	\$6.8 million	\$6.8 million
School Counselor: One per 250 students	\$80.0 million	\$82.4 million
School Psychologist: One per 1,000 students	[forthcoming]	[forthcoming]
School Social Worker: One per 1,000 students	[forthcoming]	[forthcoming]
School Nurse: One per 550 students	\$1.6 million	\$1.8 million
Eliminate the cap on funded support positions	\$332.5 million	\$339.6 million



Recommendations with limited state fiscal impact

- Propose legislation to amend the *Code* to ensure students and parents are made aware of career and technical education opportunities.
- Eliminate the flexibility provisions that waive or override SOQ staff to student ratios.
- Propose legislation to shift the SOQ review from even-numbered to odd-numbered years.
- Propose an in-depth study to determine data needs regarding deployment of SOQ positions.

