

**BATH COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD**

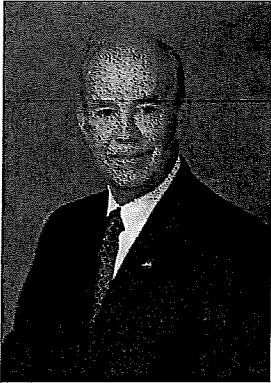
**AGENDA ITEM: INFORMATION { X }      ACTION {    }      CLOSED MEETING {    }**

**SUBJECT:                    ITEMS FOR BOARD MEMBERS**



## Accountability and School Accreditation Update

By Dr. Steven R. Staples, Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction



Dr. Steven R. Staples  
Superintendent of Public  
Instruction

Over the past three months, I have had the pleasure of attending several of your VSBA regional meetings to discuss the Board of Education's work on accountability and school accreditation. Virginia's school accountability system establishes the Commonwealth's expectations and priorities for public schools. The system also establishes a methodology to ensure educational effectiveness and to direct levels of support and intervention for distressed schools, through the Standards of Quality and the regulations for school accreditation, and to provide a standardized reporting system to inform the public and stakeholders.

Originally, school accreditation in Virginia was an input-based system, meaning accreditation was determined by each school meeting established minimum standards for staffing, facilities, textbooks, and other resources, generally on a per pupil basis. About twenty years ago, the accreditation system was reformed to focus on outcomes, mainly student achievement through pass rates on state SOL standardized tests.

While our current system has many benefits, there were also several unintended outcomes, including the laser-like focus on SOL test results as the only priority for schools. To address these unintended outcomes, the Board has begun another extensive review of the accreditation system, with the purpose of providing a more comprehensive picture of school quality that drives continuous improvement for all, not just some, schools. The Board's review, through its Committee on School and Division Accountability, also targets improved alignment of state accreditation with the accountability requirements in the new federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

The Board's discussions on school accreditation have centered on using multiple indicators of school quality (not just SOL test outcomes) on a matrix-based system that would emphasize both academic outcomes and opportunities for all students to learn. Over the past few months, the Board has taken an in-depth look at several possible indicators, including student achievement, achievement gaps, graduation rates, drop-out rates, an index of college and career readiness, and rates of chronic absenteeism. Under this matrix style system, schools would be held accountable for each indicator on the matrix. Outcomes would be displayed by one of three color-coded performance levels, from Level One-Green (at or above standard) to Level Three-Red (below standard). Performance levels would illustrate a school's status for each school quality indicator; there would be no single, A-F style performance level for a school. Displaying outcomes on each indicator offers the opportunity for schools to target specific areas for improvement. Additionally, performance levels will help inform and target technical assistance and school improvement resources from the Virginia Department of Education. Presenting accountability information in this manner builds on the work already implemented by the School Quality Profiles and provides a more comprehensive, easy to interpret picture of school quality that better informs communities about the work in schools.

Currently the Board is working to finalize the indicators for the matrix accreditation system, including the indicators required under ESSA. It is anticipated that the Board will finalize their indicator selection at their June 21-22 meeting and submit their revisions to the *Regulations Establishing the Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* through the proposed stage of the Administrative Process Act. This summer, the Board will host a series of public hearings across the state to continue to engage with and hear directly from parents, teachers, school board members, students, and other constituents. Those public hearings are still in the planning process but will be held in Fairfax, Wytheville, Harrisonburg, Mecklenburg, and Virginia Beach. Once the public hearing dates have been finalized, the full schedule will be shared with you and VSBA.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with many of you in your regions to share an update on this important work underway by the State Board. We hope that you will continue to engage with this effort, either through monthly State Board meetings, summer public hearings, or by sending your ideas or suggestions to [BOE@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:BOE@doe.virginia.gov). To learn more about the Board's work on accountability and school accreditation, please visit [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/committees\\_standing/accountability/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/committees_standing/accountability/index.shtml).

## Sue Hirsh

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**From:** Ronnie Liptrap  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 30, 2017 9:58 AM  
**To:** Sue Hirsh  
**Subject:** FW: Parking Brake Interlock Update - Blue Bird Buses

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**From:** Kirk Burns [mailto:Kirk\_Burns@cartermachinery.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 25, 2017 7:39 PM  
**To:** Ronnie Liptrap  
**Subject:** Parking Brake Interlock Update - Blue Bird Buses

Just a short note to let you know that Carter Machinery Company, Inc. will be sending out a formal letter to all school superintendents within the next day or so to provide them an update on our plan to address the Parking Brake Interlock issue on the Blue Bird buses.

We have coordinated with Blue Bird to source the kits required to retrofit all of the units. We expect the first set of kits to arrive in short order, at which time we will complete the pilot installation to determine the scope of the work and time required to complete the retrofit.

Once we complete the pilot installation, our service team will coordinate with your group to get the units scheduled for the retrofit. As the retrofit kits become available, our goal is to complete the retrofits as soon as possible. The retrofits will be completed on site and at no cost to the school districts.

On behalf of Blue Bird and Carter Machinery Company, Inc., we apologize about the inconvenience and promise to get the retrofits completed as soon as possible. If in the interim you have any questions, please call me at 804.823.1175 (Office) or 919.353.7006 (Mobile).

Again, thank you for your patience and understanding...very much appreciated.

Kirk

**Kirk Burns**  
Bus Sales Manager  
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## Superintendent's Memo #153-17

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA  
Department of Education

**DATE:** May 19, 2017  
**TO:** Division Superintendents  
**FROM:** Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction  
**SUBJECT:** **Non-compliance with the Parking Brake Interlocking Requirement of the *Virginia School Bus Specifications***

The *Virginia School Bus Specifications* authorized by the Code of Virginia and Board of Education regulations require that all school buses sold to Virginia school divisions after March 24, 2011, must meet the parking brake interlock specification. It has come to the attention of Department of Education that there are school buses sold to school divisions after March 24, 2011, that do not meet the brake interlock requirement of the *Virginia School Bus Specifications*.

Department of Education staff recently conducted inspections of school buses from several manufacturers sold after March 24, 2011, and currently operating in a school division; the inspected buses did not have the brake interlocking mechanism installed as required by the *Virginia School Bus Specifications*.

The *Virginia School Bus Specifications* effective March 24, 2011, as well as revised versions dated November 3, 2011, and December 21, 2013, contain the following requirement (with the underlined sentence applicable to most school buses operating in Virginia school divisions):

*31. Transmission.*

*C. Automatic transmissions incorporating a parking pawl shall have a transmission shifter interlock controlled by the application of the service brake to prohibit accidental engagement of the transmission. All non-parking pawl transmissions shall incorporate a park brake interlock that requires the service brake to be applied to allow release of the parking brake.*

In order to determine the scope of the non-compliant buses that will need to be retrofitted, the Department of Education will be sending out a survey to all school divisions. I request that your staff complete and send the survey back to the Department as soon as possible.

We will inform the bus dealers and manufacturers about this missing safety feature and advise them of the urgency to prepare and submit a corrective action plan to schedule the retrofits to install the parking brake interlock system on non-compliant buses as soon as possible. Department staff will follow up with school divisions, bus manufacturers, and bus dealers to bring the non-compliant buses into full compliance with the *Virginia School Bus Specifications*.

We will also advise all bus manufacturers doing business with Virginia's school divisions that all buses delivered after the issuance of this memorandum must meet this specifications requirement. Please alert your staff to inspect the new buses delivered and to check and ensure that this safety feature is installed on these buses and is working as specified.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the Office of Support Services at (804) 225-2037, or contact Kerry Miller, Associate Director for Pupil Transportation, at (804) 225-2772 or [Kerry.miller@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Kerry.miller@doe.virginia.gov).

SRS:KM