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Advocacy Subcommittee
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August 30, 2023

Virginia Board of Education
101 North 14th Street
Richmond, VA 23219

RE: Virginia 2023 Mathematics Standards of Learning

Dear President Creasey and Members of the Board,

As a professional learning organization, Virginia ASCD has continually supported the progression of Virginia's state standards towards those that promote deeper learning in our classrooms. It is with great optimism that we write to you in favor of the standards presented in today's Board Agenda item, Item A, Attachment 1: Final Review of Proposed Revised Mathematics Standards of Learning.

Having engaged a variety of stakeholders, the new standards in Mathematics represent what we support in teaching and learning. We appreciate the thorough and collaborative process that involved stakeholders across the Commonwealth to create a draft of standards that are aligned with the needs of Virginia's students. Within the standards, we see the potential for deeper learning, implementation of the 5 Cs and durable skills, incorporation of NCTM's process standards, context-based learning and embedding the 17 career clusters, opportunities for interdisciplinary connections, a greater vertical alignment with connections across the standards, and an increase in data collection and analysis.

During June's Board meeting, our Executive Director expressed concern about the timeline for implementation. As a follow-up, we would like to express our willingness and expertise to assist with preparation for implementation. VASCD is positioned to support teacher preparation through assistance with facilitating the regional hubs, providing field expertise in developing instructional materials, providing an opportunity for further development during our winter content forum, and amplifying the messaging and communication through our membership, network, and extended audience.

Finally, we would like to bring to your attention concerns raised in the document's introduction. **We strongly recommend that VBOE separate the introduction section that includes the Guiding Principles and Implementation headings from the actual standards**. Doing so will allow you to accept the standards for final review and provide you and the department with time to gather feedback and input from the field experts. In particular, we recommend that three

organizations in Virginia consisting of expert math educators be consulted on this section of the document – VCTM, VACMS, and VCMS.

In addition to several grammatical errors and technical inconsistencies, we wanted to provide a few specific examples of why this portion of the document deserves further consideration.

Guiding Principles

- In the *Raise the Floor; Remove the Ceiling* section, define "extra time" and how that might look.
- In the *Ensure Every Student Builds Strong Mathematics Foundational Skills* section, the second sentence of the first point, "We are getting the foundations done much earlier," is concerning. First, the word "done" minimizes the importance of the foundational skills and makes them seem like a check-the-box have-to versus the case being made in the opening of the section. Second, the word "earlier" is dismissive of the appropriate developmental needs of each student. Additionally, this section references "accelerated pathways" with no definitive clarity on what that means or may look like.
- In the *Master Critical Content* section, the opening paragraph references mastering (or not) critical content. From an elementary grades perspective, this raises questions about content beyond grade level as well as the prospect of being held back for not mastering; it is a question that needs to be addressed.
- In the *Prepare Teachers to Teach Mathematics Accurately and Effectively* section, the word choices bring a perceived indictment on math educators in Virginia. Additionally, the second paragraph of this section makes the case for how an accelerated timeline might be detrimental to implementation.
- In the *Apply Mathematics to Better Use Technology* section, the phrase, "skills before using technology as a substitute," makes an assumption and dismisses the role of technology in mathematics skill development.

Background on the Revisions and a Roadmap for Successful Implementation of the Standards

- Throughout this section, "acceleration" is prioritized over going deeper in the content.
- In multiple sections the standards are referred to as "best in class" and '"benchmarked against NAEP, ACT, and SAT." We recommend these references be clarified and clearly defined.
- In the *Implementation* section, we recommend further discussion regarding actions to be taken by each stakeholder level, with particular attention to the funding that will need to accompany these action items. For the VDOE action items, there will be funding and staffing needs to accompany the Algebra and advanced coursework in middle school (1) and tutoring resources (4). For the State Board of Education action items, there will be funding and staffing needs to accompany the graduation requirement of four years of credit-bearing math for all students (1) and benchmarking to NAEP (2). For the Local School Divisions action items, there will be funding needs to implement tutoring and interventions (3) and enrichment opportunities that include dual enrollment, summer camps, and higher education programming (5).

We reiterate that the standards provided are exceptional and should be accepted so that preparation for implementation can begin at all levels. We do, however, raise concerns and recommendations to separate the introductory section preceding the standards for further discussion and input.

VASCD stands ready to support these new standards and the professional learning that should accompany them for our educators. Our organization is both eager and poised to collaborate with you, VDOE, and other stakeholders in the Commonwealth.

Respectfully,



Christopher M. Jones, Executive Director
On behalf of the VASCD Policy Team

About VASCD

Virginia ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development), an affiliate of ASCD, is a non-profit membership organization dedicated to advancing excellence in Virginia's schools. We have 1,800 members in Virginia who are teachers, superintendents, teacher educators, school leaders, students, and central office administrators. We represent a variety of roles and share a single purpose - ensuring a world-class education for every Virginia student.