

MEMORANDUM

To: Joint Consolidation Committee
From: Subcommittee on Governance
RE: Status & Recommendations

I. Background

The Governance Subcommittee has met approximately 6 times since March - concerning itself primarily with policy manual adoption, procedure and schedule for existing superintendent/board member terms, an alternative school board composition, and central office administrative structure.

Historical and existing models for the above topics have been explored. The mergers of Alleghany County and Clifton Forge and the contractual agreement between James City County and Williamsburg being the most prominent examples. The fiscal analysis commissioned by the JSSC and authored by Mr. James Regimbal and Mr. Richard Salmon have also provided some insight the subcommittee has found useful.

II. Findings

A. Policy Manual Adoption

The basis for both divisions' policy manuals comes in the form of recommendations from the Virginia School Board Association (VSBA). As such, the two policy manuals are more similar than they are different, with a great many subsections being identical. There are, however, substantive differences in Personnel and Students subsections, with the ACPS manual being more comprehensive in those areas.

B. School Board Composition

The Virginia Code provides limited means for which to compose a school board for a newly consolidated school district. Specifically, the Code provides that "within sixty days prior to the effective date for the formation of the division school board, the ***governing body of each county and city*** or part thereof in the school division shall appoint the required number of members of the division school board from such county or city as follows...

- "if there be one member, he shall be appointed for a term of four years; if there be two members, one shall be appointed for a term of two years and one for a term of four years;"
- "if there be three members, one shall be appointed for a term of two years, one for a term of three years, and one for a term of four years;"
- "if there be four members, one shall be appointed for a term of one year, one for a term of two years, one for a term of three years, and one for a term of four years;"

Va. Code § 22.1-53(B) (emphasis added).

At times throughout this process, the JSSC has discussed many potential methods for the composition of a potential consolidated school board. These discussions usually focused a hypothetical "hybrid" model (usually referred to as "2/2/3") of division governance wherein each locality would elect two members and three members would be elected "at-large" from both voters of both localities. This idea proved challenging for a number of reasons. Principle among these challenges was the need for special legislation from the General Assembly to permit such a unique form of representation. As a result of these obstacles and the need for special legislation, this subcommittee focused its efforts on formulating an alternative composition consistent with existing law. The subcommittee's deliberations centered on previous talks between Covington City and Alleghany County and a review of other collaborative examples from around the state.

C. Procedure and Schedule for Existing Superintendent/Board Member Terms

In order to gain additional perspective, the subcommittee examined several historical examples in depth. Fortunately, a thorough case study of the school merger between Clifton Forge and Alleghany County was available in the form of a dissertation authored by Mrs. Mary Burton, a local resident and educator, in 1989. An accurate timeline as well as firsthand accounts of the merger by way of interviews is included in the dissertation and has proved to be very helpful.

D. Central Office Administrative Structure

The fiscal analysis provided by Mr. Regimbal and Mr. Salmon provided the basis for our conversations about administrative structure. For analysis purposes, they supposed a structure very similar to ACPS current structure would be utilized. ACPS has a considerably larger administrative office structure than does CCPS. Our own discussions explored the benefits of a larger central office staff, with the consensus being that current CCPS structure is likely too small to reasonably handle the necessary workload in a consolidated division.

III. Recommendations

Policy Manual - It is the subcommittee's recommendation that the combined School Board adopt policies and procedures which resolve obvious conflicts and amend for use either of the two existing policy and procedures manuals for operational use during the 2022 - 2023 school year.

School Board Composition - Our recommendation is the creation of an appointed "4-3" school board, with 4 members appointed by Alleghany County and 3 members appointed by Covington City. Since the subcommittee is recommending 4 members for Alleghany and 3 members for Covington, when the County Board/City Council appoint these individuals they would be appointing them subject to the staggered terms outlined above. Accordingly, the County Board/City Council could make these "at-large" appointments at the outset when

appointing the new members. The new Consolidated School Board would ultimately function on 4-year terms; however, when first appointed, the terms would be staggered.

It is the further recommendation of the subcommittee that a 2/3 majority vote of the full body (7), is recommended for the hiring/termination of the superintendent's position and facility construction/closure.

Superintendent/Board Schedule and Procedure - It is recommended that the two existing superintendents would be the candidates considered for the position of superintendent of the consolidated division. Upon selection of one of the candidates, the remaining incumbent would fill the role of Assistant Superintendent. If the Superintendent position is vacated, the Assistant Superintendent would fill that position. Upon a vacancy of the Assistant Superintendent position, that position would not be refilled.

Our current timeline calls for an effective date for a consolidated board of July 1, 2022 and a merger of student bodies in the 2023-2024 school year. Five (5) area wide school board terms are up for reappointment for terms beginning July 1, 2022. Allowing these expirations brings the total members of both school boards to 7, with 4 being from the County and 3 being from the City. While technically the consolidated board must be advertised and reappointed as new, if desired, an agreement could be made to reappoint the remaining school board members from each division to the new consolidated board.

Central Office Structure - The subcommittee recommends the use of a structure similar to current ACPS structure, especially in the years immediately after a merger. With that said, it is also recognized that a merger of central offices could create situations where duties could be combined and careful considerations should be made where those opportunities arise.