

District Quality Standards (DQS) and Quality Assurance Regulations (QAR)

House Education Committee
March 2, 2023

Rationale

- There is a lot of district "process variability" between state-level accountability and the classroom.
- One cause of this variability is a lack of district process standards and quality assurance regulation which minimizes the effectiveness of AOE support and oversight functions in reducing this variability.
- This tendency toward variability in district processes has always been a feature of Vermont's education system but has now been exacerbated by the pandemic and the larger demographic trends which together are contributing to labor shortages and the potential for even higher levels of staff turnover and variability.
- Stronger and more consistent district-level **core** processes can address persistent quality and equity concerns and mitigate the impact of staff turnover to a certain extent.
- Imagining core district process standards as a function of a concise quality assurance process will increase the effectiveness of these new regulations.

Responsibility and Authority

- The State is ultimately responsible for education (quality and equity) - education is a common benefit
- The State delegates authority to enact its responsibility.
- The State largely delegates authority to three entities:
 - The Electorate of a School District (budget, purchase real estate)
 - School District Boards (policy, curriculum, facilities)
 - District Superintendents (CEO, general administration)
- DQS and QAR focuses on key points of delegated authority to districts and superintendents

Education Rules and Regulations

- Typically defined by SBOE
- Act 127 (2022) – charged AOE with developing rules for
 - DQS: Business Operations, Facilities Management, and School Board Governance
 - Quality Assurance Process
- SBOE working on revisions to EQS
- AOE filed DQS and QAR. Go live 2025.

QAR Mechanisms

- Local Responsibility (Superintendents and School Boards)
 - Assurance
 - Self-Assessment
- AOE Oversight
 - Identification
 - Technical Support
- SBOE Accountability – 16 V.S.A. § 165

Local Responsibility - Assurance

Local Assurance (Superintendent)	
Operations and Maintenance Manual (FAC)	Capital Improvement Plan (FAC)
Facilities Manager (FAC)	Emergency Operations Plan (FAC)
Physical Security (FAC)	Emergency Protocols (FAC)

Local Responsibility - Self-Assessment

Local Self-Assessment (Superintendent + Board)		
Budgeting & Accounting (BUS)	Governance Protocols (GOV)	Staff Evaluation (EQS)
Internal Controls (BUS)	Governance Processes (GOV)	Tiered System of Support (EQS)
Hiring & Licensing (BUS)	Curriculum Coordination (EQS)	Access to Instructional Materials (EQS)
Data Management (BUS)	Local Graduation Requirements (EQS)	Local Comprehensive Assessment System (EQS)
Governance Priorities (GOV)	Needs-Based Professional Learning (EQS)	Continuous Improvement Plan (EQS)

AOE Oversight - Identification

- Identification of districts for accountability purposes is a function of two variables:
 - Student proficiency
 - Quality of core EQS processes
- Identification and oversight a three-year period - ID plus two-years

Identification

Good Proficiency	Good Proficiency with Low-Quality Processes	Good Proficiency and High-Quality Processes
Low Proficiency	Low Proficiency and Low-Quality Processes	Low Proficiency with High-Quality Processes
	Low-Quality Processes	High-Quality Processes

AOE Oversight – Technical Support

- Focused technical support on EQS processes for those districts that have:
 - Good Proficiency with Low-Quality Processes; and/or
 - Low Proficiency with High-Quality Processes
- Process rating tools and scales to be developed for local and AOE use

SBOE Accountability

- SBOE accountability process comes from 16 V.S.A. § 165. If the school fails to meet the standards or make sufficient progress within two years of the determination, the Secretary shall recommend:
 - the Agency continue to provide technical assistance
 - Adjustment to supervisory union boundaries or responsibilities of the superintendency
 - Secretary assume administrative control of an individual school, school district, or supervisory union
 - State Board close an individual school or schools and require that the school district pay tuition to another public school or an approved independent school
 - State Board require two or more school districts to consolidate their governance structures

Next Steps

- ICAR approved the rules with a few corrections on February 22, 2023
- See the [Agency's Rules Site](#) for a copy of the draft rules and next steps for public comment
- More detailed testimony
- Questions