

District Quality Standards (DQS)

October 16, 2024

District Quality Standards

- Rule Series 100: [Agency of Education Rules | Agency of Education \(vermont.gov\)](#)
- Established in Act 127 of 2023, [16 V.S.A. § 165](#)
- Applicable to public Supervisory Unions and Supervisory Districts – not applicable to independent schools
- Effective July 1, 2025

Rationale

- The State (AOE) is responsible for providing equitable access to high quality education to Vermont learners.
- Assurances are needed to support the successful delegation of this authority.
- Significant process variability in Vermont's education system has been exacerbated by:
 - Pandemic
 - Labor Shortages and Increased Staff Turnover
 - Economic impacts

Expected Outcomes

- Stronger and more consistent district-level core processes that can:
 - Address persistent quality concerns
 - Reduce equity gaps
 - Mitigate the impact of staff turnover
- Increased ability to deliver relevant technical support
 - Absent clear standards, difficult to provide methodical and effective supports

District Quality Standards

- Provide new district-level standards in:
 - Business Operations
 - Facilities Management
 - Facilities Safety
 - Governance
- Represent critical, high-leverage systems that support equitable access to high quality education
- Focused on end results rather than prescriptive processes
- Attainable for all districts regardless of scale or structure (future oriented, system focused)
- Is not a mechanism by which EQS is comprehensively measured or reviewed

Quality Assurance Regulations (QAR)

- Utilizes state assessment scores as basis for AOE intervention and review
- Designed to be achievable by Vermont education system

Primary elements of QAR:

- 1. District Self-Evaluation (Annual)**
- 2. AOE Three-Year Intermediate Review**
 1. Districts are selected for intermediate review from a subset of schools identified for comprehensive supports (CSI) and additional targeted supports (ATSI)
- 3. SBE Hearing:** Described in 16 VSA 165. Occurs following the Intermediate Review *if* District fails to take corrective action.

Self-Evaluation: Expected Results

- Year of Implementation = Expectation setting.
- Many SU/SD's will self-evaluate below "Proficient"
 - AOE will analyze data for trends vs individual review.
 - Emphasis on technical supports.
 - Review potential for knowledge and resource sharing.
- DQS Proficiency alone will not trigger Intermediate Review
 - Intermediate review begins with identification based on performance and assessment data.
- Expect to see improvement over time – unlikely to see significant changes by second year.

Proficiency Scales (Rubrics)

- Rubrics define proficiency, on 1-4 scale, for each of the new standards.
- Criteria provide clearly defined examples, such as methods or systems used, specific quantitative benchmarks, or activities that represent proficiency.
- Rubrics reflect significant input from various education partners, including administrators, business managers, facilities directors, and school safety partners.
- AOE engaged in an iterative process with VSBA to develop rubrics to support the established Governance standards using the same methodology.
- Rubrics will be used to support annual self-evaluation and will be the basis for AOE intensive review.

Reserve Fund Balance

- FY25 “Yield Bill” (H.887) requires consideration to include recommended reserve fund account standards in DQS.
- AOE has begun conversations with business managers to compile existing best practices, recommendations, and existing statutory references to reserve fund accounting.
- Potential to include reserve fund standards as a component of the “Budgeting and Accounting” section of DQS.
- May require amendments to rule through formal rulemaking.

Upcoming Milestones

- Stakeholder engagement to refine, and finalize, rubrics and 1-4 Proficiency Scale (target December 2024).
- Potential rulemaking regarding reserve fund amendment (target December 2024).
- Integration of selected EQS standards included in DQS section 131.1.1 – develop 1-4 proficiency scale rubrics using same methodology and clearly defined criteria.
- Development of reporting dashboard (initial planning underway – target April 2025)
- Implement and collect first year self-evaluation (July 2025)