



Patrick Henry Building - East Reading Room
1111 E. Broad St. Richmond, VA 23219

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MEETING MINUTES

Attendance (19 present, 16 in-person, 3 virtually*)

Avendano	Jonathan*	Guzmán	C. Alexander	Revilla	Emilio
Berry	Paul	Fierro Kelly	Jennifer	Sanchezconcha	Lyons
Chase	Jo-Ann	Kline-Gabel	Karina	Soto	Rodrigo
Clavijo	Wendy*	Medina	Yahusef	Vega	Juan
De Silva	Joshua	Metzger	Ana	Watkins	Walewska*
Espinoza	Juan	Patterson	Diana	Williams	Cecilia
Gamez	Astrid	Rimola	Sergio	Zelaya	Eduardo

= present

= not present

= partial attendance

Administration's staff present: Erik Conyers, Special Assistant of the Administration

9:05 a.m. Call to Order and Introductory Remarks – Lyons Sanchezconcha, Chair of VLAB

Welcome Commissioner and welcome members to Richmond

Outline order of events for meeting

Break for committee work

9:10 a.m. Committee Breakouts & Working Lunch - Committee Sessions

Business & Workforce

Education & Career Training

Health

Housing & Community Development

10:30 a.m. Call General Session to Order – Lyons Sanchezconcha, Chair of VLAB

Roll call attendance taken, seventeen members present

Waleska Watkins is participating virtually, Paul will have to leave early

Jonathan and Wendy will hope to join virtually as possible, both are traveling

10:40 a.m. Meeting Minutes and Meeting Agenda – Lyons Sanchezconcha, Chair of VLAB

Jo Ann Chase motioned to approve the March meeting minutes

Alex Guzman seconded the motion

The Board approved the March meeting minutes by voice vote with no dissent or absents

Juan Vega motioned to approve the May meeting agenda

Diana Patterson seconded the motion to approve the agenda

The Board approved the May meeting agenda by voice vote with no dissent or abstentions

10:43 a.m. Public Comment - Lyons Sanchezconcha, Chair of VLAB

Public comment provided by Maribel Castañeda, former Director of Appointments under Gov. Northam. She thanked the Board members for their service and said that we are a voice for our underrepresented communities.

10:50 a.m. Administrative Updates – Eric Conyers

Change from agenda, Emma Jenson cannot attend, but Eric Conyers is here to assist

Chair Sanchezconcha recognized Micheal Perez as the state deputy director of DOI

Joshua DeSilva asked Michael Perez about the comments from the state's Chief DEI Officer about "DEI" being "dead," and asked if there was any follow up. Michael Perez stated there was no follow up. Asked if they could meet with VLAB, Michael Perez stated there was no reason to rule that out.

Juan Espinoza shared about Virginia Tech as an example of you can increase diversity without decreasing merit

Rodrigo Soto mentioned recent reporting stating that the Youngkin administration has made whiter and more male appointments than previous administrations

Lyons referenced that the word "equity" has become taboo, but equitable measures such as HBCU scholarships and Women in STEM initiatives have come out of the Governor's administration; discussion around this is pertinent and applicable to work of the board

10:58 a.m. Listening Session Recap – Lyons Sanchezconcha, Chair of VLAB

9 attendees in addition to the VLAB representation were present at the Sacred Heart Center.

The focus was on education due in part to attendance from the Richmond Public Schools. One stat that was shared is that there is only one interpreter for the entire district available at RPS. Board discussed ways to advertise and get the word out about listening sessions moving forward.

Paul Berry discussed the Board's statutory role as the "formal liaison between the Latino community and the Governor's Office."

11:10 a.m. Right Help, Right Now Overview, Deputy Secretary James Williams, Health & Human Resources

Dep. Secretary Williams discussed details of implementation of the Governor's Right Help, Right Now plan focused on mental health services statewide. The 988 mental health crisis line is now available statewide to provide mh crisis services. Language access is a focus of the program including Spanish language counselors. Crisis receiving centers are a focus to help eliminate the

criminalization of mental health. Joshua DeSilva asked about implementation of Right Help, Right Now on college campuses and in schools. Dr. DeSilva also asked about language access and cultural competence in the roll out. Dep. Sec. Williams stated that the department intends to hire a consultant to provide recommendations on language access. Juan Vega and Jo Ann Chase mentioned the needs of elderly Virginians. Dr. DeSilva recommended to Dep. Sec. Williams that HHR's VMAP program includes cultural competence and language access. Lyons Sanchezconcha mentioned the need for trauma informed care for school based providers and gave the example of a lockdown at a Richmond high school.

11:45 a.m. Chair's Report – Lyons Sanchezconcha, Chair of VLAB

Chair Sanchezconcha thanked Board members for their service. The Chair reminded everyone of the [Code of Conduct from the Secretary's Office](#) to ensure effective board meetings. As of today, we will have a first draft of the annual report.

The next board meeting will be August 11, 2023 from 10 to 4 in Gloucester, VA. Juan Vega will be taking over the Housing and Community Development Committee.

Please send relevant events you participated in to include in the report. Speak on report progress, board leadership pathways, and thank outgoing members.

11:55 a.m. Farewell to Outgoing Members—Lyons Sanchezconcha, Chair of VLAB

The Chair thanked Waleska Watkins, Rodrigo Soto, Karina Kline-Gabel, Sergio Rimola, and Paul Berry. Each of these members' terms expires on June 30. The outgoing members shared remarks about their service on VLAB.

-break-

12:10 p.m. Committee Reports

12:15 p.m. Business – Diana Patterson, Committee Chair

Present the Business and Workforce Committee DRAFT 2023 Report Recommendations:

Provide \$1M in state funding to George Mason University towards the Virginia Small Business Development Center program for the course of two fiscal years to hire bilingual advisors.

Provide zero-fare public transportation to Virginians:

- **Support and expand** the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP) funds for the purpose of providing zero-fare grants to jurisdictions throughout the Commonwealth.
- **Support** the passing of the federal Freedom to Move Act, whose purpose is to provide federal funds for fare-free public transportation.

Create a Marketing & Communications plan to better disseminate information about state resources, both to the community and internally within state departments including a Tip Line for

Virginia residents

- **Launch** Estamos Contigo Campaign
- **Create** a dedicated hotline for Latino business owners to share their ideas with us. Provide funds for the printing of a half million bilingual postcard-size flyers with the hotline telephone number.

Juan Vega moves to approve, Rodrigo Soto 2nds, motion passes unanimously

12:29 p.m. Health – Astrid Gamez, Committee Chair

Present the Health Committee DRAFT 2023 Report Recommendations:

- Fentanyl epidemic in Virginia: Will recommend outreach and education to parents and teachers
- Healthcare prevention related to common elderly diseases such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's
- Mental health resources for the Latino community in line with "Right Help, Right Now" to include training to School administrators, teachers and parents.

Juan Vega moves to approve, Lyons Sanchezconcha 2nds, motion passes unanimously

12:35 p.m. Housing and Community Development– Rodrigo Soto - Reporting

Present the Housing and Community Development DRAFT 2023 Report Recommendations:

- Recommendation to increase Housing Trust Fund to levels proposed in the outgoing budget from the previous administration
- Recommendation to fund education programs around homeownership
- Recommendation regarding funding for rental vouchers

Jo-Ann Chase moves to approve, Rodrigo Soto 2nds, motion passes unanimously

12:52 p.m. Education and Career Training – Yahusef Medina, Committee Chair

Present the Education & Career Training Committee DRAFT 2023 Report Recommendations:

Still finalizing recommendations but focusing on funding for ELL students

- Looking at college access and attainability measures
- Continuing on 2022 recommendations in line with Secretary's initiatives
- Committee heard from [Opportunity Scholars Program](#)

Alex Guzman moves to approve, Sergio Rimola 2nds, motion passes unanimously

12:55 p.m. Board Discussion and New Business – Lyons Sanchezconcha, Chair of VLAB

We will hope to make more time for this going forward, especially at our next meeting
Preface Jo-Ann Chase's request for prayer, its timeline, and the review of its possibility

Jo-Ann Chase gives background and reasoning on her request for prayer at meetings
Jo-Ann moves that beginning with the next meeting that the VLAB start each meeting with

The Pledge of Allegiance, and that VLAB adopt a policy for prayer/invocation at meetings.

Astrid Gamez seconds the motion

Discussion among board members follows

Justin Bell chimes in with legal implications to consider

Establishment Clause

Cannot promote or discourage any particular religion

All members present express their thoughts on the matter

Chair Sanchezconcha starts roll-call vote:

Jonathan Avendano	Yea
Paul Berry	Nay
Jo-Ann Chase	Yea
Wendy Clavijo	-absent-
Dr. Joshua De Silva	Nay
Juan Espinoza	Nay
Astrid Gamez	Yea
C. Alexander Guzmán	Nay
Jennifer Fierro Kelly	Abstain
Karina Kline-Gabel	-absent-
Yahusef Medina	Nay
Ana Metzger	Yea
Diana Patterson	Nay
Dr. Sergio Rimola	-absent-
Emilio Revilla	Nay
Lyons Sanchezconcha	Nay
Rodrigo Soto	Nay
Juan Vega	Abstain
Walewska Watkins	Nay
Cecilia Williams	Abstain
Eduardo Zelaya	-absent-

The motion does not pass.

4:00 p.m. Closing Remarks and Announcements – Lyons Sanchezconcha, Chair of VLAB

Reminder of Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center conference in Richmond

Reminder of the limit of 2 virtual meetings per year (committees included)

Lyons moved to adjourn, Rodrigo 2nds; motion passed unanimously.