

To: Ms. Vanessa Wigand
From: Aidan Brown
RE: Mental Health Applied Policy Project
Date: October 5, 2018

The Applied Policy Project is the capstone assignment for the Master of Public Policy degree from the Batten school. As a degree candidate, I serve as an independent consultant providing comprehensive analysis on a policy problem to a non-profit or government office. This project includes a literature review, formulation of policy alternatives, development of evaluative criteria, a recommendation, and implementation guidelines.

For the Department of Education, my analysis will tackle the prevalence of mental health issues in Virginia high schools. It will explore any possible policy alternatives to improve outcomes, including but not limited to the updating of the Virginia SOLs. Possible alternatives could also include reworking school response to mental health cases, increasing funding for after-school programs, or providing additional training for teachers and guidance counselors. I will be able to include an annex to address the implementation and projected outcomes of the SOL update more thoroughly and directly, as this is currently the main focus of the DoE.

The analysis will serve as a stand-alone, third-party complement to the work of the DoE review team. Additionally, the analysis will provide ways that DoE can expand their policies for improving mental health outcomes further.

The literature review process for the project will begin this semester, with a deliverable expected by early February. The analysis paper will begin next semester, with a final deliverable expected in early May. Usually, intermediate steps of the final paper are not shared with the client, as they are benchmarks to review with project advisors to ensure quality of the final product.