



## Promising Practices in Action

A Promising Practice Toolkit from Virginia's Turnaround Schools

---

October 2012

DRAFT

Compiled by Corbett Education Consulting for the Virginia Department of Education's  
Office of School Improvement

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Culture &amp; Climate</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Central High School: 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Transition Program .....	4
Lincoln Terrace Elementary School: Tiger P.R.I.D.E Discipline Program.....	7
Lindenwood Elementary School: End of the Year Student Swap .....	9
Prince Edward County High School: Establishing Culture of Transformation.....	11
Thompson Middle School: Building a Values-Based School Community.....	14
<b>Data-Based Decision-Making</b> .....	<b>18</b>
AP Hill Elementary School: Cougar Stats .....	18
Armstrong High School: Using Student Data – A Collaborative Approach.....	22
Lake Taylor Middle School: Grade Level Clusters .....	26
Peabody Middle School: Principal-Led Data Conferences .....	29
Prince Edward County High School: Graduation Initiative.....	34
Westside Elementary School: Sacred Tuesday Grade Level Meetings.....	36
<b>Instruction</b> .....	<b>39</b>
Fries School: Implementation of Reading and Math Instructional Coaches .....	39
Russell Middle School: Redesigning the Master Schedule.....	42
TC Williams High School: Titan Time.....	45
Tidewater Park Elementary School: All Hands Type Writing Club.....	48
Vernon Johns Jr. High School: R.E.A.C.H.I.N.G Across the Curriculum.....	50
<b>Professional Learning Communities</b> .....	<b>53</b>
Boushall Middle School: Leadership Matters – How Distributive-Collaborative Leadership Impacts Student Achievement .....	53
Colonial Beach Middle/High School: Teacher Mentoring Program.....	56
J.E.B Stuart Elementary School: Academic Success Team.....	58
J.M. Langston Focus School: Pearson Learning Teams – A collaborative approach to improving instructional practices.....	62
Prince Edward County High School: Community of Learners.....	65
Sussex Middle School: Building Capacity Through Teacher-Led PD.....	67

## Introduction

Along with many other states, Virginia significantly changed the supports and services provided to, and monitoring processes of, the Commonwealth's lowest-performing schools for the 2010-11 school year. Teams from the schools and districts, who are recipients of federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds, gather throughout the year to align their reforms with the federal requirements, to learn national best and promising practices, and to learn and support each other throughout implementation. Both school and district staff appreciate the ability to learn from other schools going through the same process. As a result, we've created a turnaround guidebook that compiles promising practices implemented at SIG schools across Virginia.

All current SIG schools were asked to self-nominate one or more promising practices and submit information about that practice, as well as any companion documents that might be helpful to other schools wanting to implement a similar practice.

While schools and districts could submit information on any promising practice, policy or structure, all submissions fell into four categories: Culture & Climate, Data-Based Decision-Making, Instruction, and Professional Learning Communities. All of the SIG schools are implementing numerous promising practices, but only a few of those practices are highlighted here. As additional practices are implemented and compiled across the Commonwealth, this "live" document will be edited and expanded to reflect the growing number of practices.

It should also be noted that the SIG schools all work with an external Lead Turnaround Partner to support the planning and implementation of either the federal turnaround or transformation models. Some of these practices were developed with significant support by the Lead Partners, while others were developed by school or community staff.

These promising practices are not perfect and some could use further refinement (i.e. more direct measures of effectiveness, better fidelity of implementation, etc.), but they all provide a basis for others to work off.

For more information on Virginia's school improvement process, see the following resources:

- [The Virginia Story: Forging Strong Working Relationships Among the State, District, School, and External Lead Partners for the Implementation of School Improvement Grants](#), Prepared by Corbett Education Consulting for the Center on Innovation & Improvement, October 30, 2010.
- [Virginia's SIG requests to USED](#), US Department of Education.
- [1003g Title I School Improvement Resources](#), Office of School Improvement, Virginia Department of Education.

The schools, districts, and Lead Partner organizations own the attachments and supplemental resources. Please use the documents as a resource for your own program development, but cite the document owners as appropriate.

## Culture & Climate

### Central High School: 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Transition Program

**District:** King & Queen County Public Schools

**District Type:** Rural

**School Level:** Middle/High (Grades 8–12)

#### Description of Practice

Much data and research has been collected in education and has been documented citing the need for transition programs for students entering high school. While high schools traditionally serve grades 9 through 12, Central High School students start in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The additional year creates some concerns with the age and maturity level of students and is a large adjustment for students coming directly from the county's elementary school. Due to the presence and needs of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, a program was developed to assist incoming 8<sup>th</sup> graders transition into the high school.

#### Implementation Steps

A meeting was held in late May of 2011 to create a plan of support for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The developed system includes an orientation, an intervention program, teacher mentors, and a series of student assemblies.

- In August, the incoming 8<sup>th</sup> graders come to Central High School and are exposed to the facility and the “routine” of being a high school student.
- The intervention program includes academic, disciplinary, and social supports for 8<sup>th</sup> graders. The basic components of the intervention program are highlighted below:
  - Eighth grade students have seven periods a day, like students in grades 9 – 12, but their 7<sup>th</sup> period classes allow for exposure to other programs and for additional supports and enrichment. Such programs include reading, ROTC, art, and band.
  - These classes are held for 9-weeks at a time.
  - During the 7<sup>th</sup> period, the reading and math teachers also have the ability to pull students aside for additional assistance.
- The 8th grade teachers (6) have divided the 8th grade (41 students) and have adopted 7 students each. The teacher mentor acts as a mentor not only for academic reasons, but also for transitional purposes to the high school. Examples of mentor responsibilities: transition information, and guidance related to academics, social life, discipline, and attendance. The mentors also connect with parents on a regular basis. Before calling parents, they gather information from the other teachers to provide the parents updated information on the student's complete performance.
- Each 9-weeks, the students also attend an 8<sup>th</sup> grade assembly to discuss school topics and attend events, such as:
  - Being a new student at CHS and how to “play” school

- Developing an academic plan
- How to schedule classes and understand graduation requirements, and
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade field day and picnic.

### **Staffing Plan**

The management of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade transition and support program includes: the 8<sup>th</sup> grade faculty team (including reading, history, band, ROTC, special education and math teachers), the administrators, and the guidance counselor.

The teaching faculty works with students in their respective disciplines, while also act as mentors for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Planning meetings are held each nine weeks. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers also meet with parents and students who may need assistance in academics or discipline.

### **Measures of Effectiveness**

By June 30, 2013, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade transition/remediation program will be measured by:

- 1) Data (e.g., nine-week, benchmark, SOL tests) that indicate a 10% increase in student achievement in the core areas from the previous school year's scores.
- 2) Review & analysis of common assessments and intervention strategies utilized to increase student learning.
- 3) Documentation of team collaboration, work, and decisions provided by core team logs. Communication logs will also be maintained to track student and parent contacts.

### **Early Results**

Initial indicators of success include: student performance data, effectiveness of academic interventions in boosting student learning, and successful progress in lowering tardies, increasing attendance, and in lowering discipline referrals

The practice was well received by the staff and students. The teachers were very involved in the process and have since modified the plan to better assist the transition. A dedicated committee meets periodically to plan events, intervention, and instruction related to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade program.

### **Lessons Learned**

All teachers from each academic/discipline meeting is important to include in the transition program to “complete the circle” of people who have a relationship with the student.

## **Budget**

In terms of budget, the cost of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade transition program was covered by SIG funds and is estimated at \$1,200 per year and includes:

- Transportation for the August orientation,
- Lunches and snacks for the August orientation,
- Wages of teachers for the orientation, and
- Mentor/mentee t-shirts.

## **Plan for Scale Up, Phase Out, or Continuation**

Our high school intends to continue building on the current 8<sup>th</sup> grade transition program, and will consistently evaluate the program for improvement.

## **Attachments:**

- [CHS Master Schedule for 2011-2012](#)

## **Contact Information**

Name: Bernard “Trey” Davis III

Title: Principal

Email: [bdavis@kqps.net](mailto:bdavis@kqps.net)

Phone: (804) 785-6102

Name: Dr. Carol Beers

Title: Lead Turnaround Partner, W&M

Email: [csbeer@wm.edu](mailto:csbeer@wm.edu)

Phone: (804) 785-6102

## Lincoln Terrace Elementary School: Tiger P.R.I.D.E Discipline Program

**District:** Roanoke Schools

**District Type:** Urban

**School Level:** Elementary (Grades K–5)

### Description of Practice

Lincoln Terrace Elementary School began the foundation work of creating a school-wide discipline plan last year and worked diligently over the summer to ensure it was ready to be introduced to the entire staff, student body, and parents at the beginning of the this school year. The name of the program is Tiger P.R.I.D.E.

According to the faculty and staff, discipline was a major concern. Many teachers and parents believed that discipline was not enforced consistently. In addition, punitive consequences were not as effective, especially for our repeat offenders. Those students missed crucial instructional time due to numerous days of out-of-school suspension.

Tiger P.R.I.D.E provides opportunities for recognition of students for their positive behavior, versus always highlighting the negative behavior. Students are reminded that they are in charge of their behavior and that they always have choices.

Consistent monitoring of this program and acknowledging students for their excellent behavior has resulted in many students demonstrating character education traits, such as respect and responsibility.

Each letter in the word P.R.I.D.E represents a positive character that should be part of in a student's behavior:

- P – Polite and Productive
- R – Respect and Responsible
- I – Intelligent and Having Integrity
- D – Determined and Dependable
- E – Extraordinary

### Implementation Steps

A core group of staff began developing a school-wide plan last school year. The team met regularly throughout the ending of the school year and four times over the summer. Also, several committee members attended workshops to assist with the development and implementation of an effective school-wide discipline policy.

Prior to our initial faculty meeting for this school year, the committee presented the program to the new principal. The staff then received a two-hour training and information session on the new school-wide discipline plan.

Monthly, faculty and staff members receive a discipline report. Weekly, students (one per class) are rewarded and recognized for their good behavior. At the end of each 9-weeks, all students (without referrals) will receive a celebration/reward.

## **Staffing Plan**

Five individuals served on this committee. The behavior specialist served as the chair. Each member was assigned a component and was required to report to the committee members. Each team member was assigned a specific grade level to assist with implementation.

## **Measures of Effectiveness**

The number of referrals per teacher and per grade is the most important data point analyzed. The committee compiles a monthly report and teachers discuss discipline, as it relates to instruction and the academic success of a student, during their RTI days. At the end of each 9-week period, teachers, students and parents are asked to complete a survey. The results of the survey are shared with administration and staff members. Opportunities to share this information with parents are available. Some of this data has been used to develop IEPs or behavior contracts for students and also provides the principal with information about teachers' classroom management styles and needs.

## **Early Results**

The number of referrals has already decreased compared to last year.

## **Budget**

SIG funding paid for several staff members to attend the summer conferences, summer work hours, printing costs, student incentives, and binders.

## **Other Hints**

It is very important that the administrator sets the expectation for behavior and holds all teachers accountable for implementation. The program is only as effective as the administration and teachers who implement and monitor it.

## **Plan for Scale Up, Phase Out, or Continuation**

The Community Engagement Coordinator assists with this program and she has established a few business partners that help provide student incentives. This model will be continued and we will seek some additional funding to maintain its integrity.

## **Contact Information**

Name: Sonja Morgan  
Title: Title I Resources  
Email: [smorgan@rcps.info](mailto:smorgan@rcps.info)  
Phone: (540) 853-2994

## Lindenwood Elementary School: End of the Year Student Swap

**District:** Norfolk Public Schools

**District Type:** Urban

**School Level:** Elementary (Grades K–5)

### Description of Practice

The student swap provides an opportunity for teachers to work with rising students and to gauge their academic preparedness for their new grade level. Additionally, it supports the social and emotional development of students by providing them the opportunity to begin building positive relationships with a new teacher and be exposed to the academic content and new grade level expectations. Lastly, the experience allows teachers to have vertical conversations about observed strengths and weaknesses of the rising students.

### Implementation Steps

The planning process began with a leadership team meeting focused on planning the swap. Grade chairs and other team members were given a planning template that required them to reflect on possible logistical barriers, suggestions to remove barriers, and strategies on how to involve the 5th grade students (rising 6th graders) in the process. Next, the results from the brainstorming sessions were charted and a plan for implementation developed.

Each member of the team was given a task to ensure a smooth implementation. Grade chairs were charged with informing their team-members of the implementation plan, aligning it with grade level end of the year activities to avoid conflicts, and designating a time to communicate with the receiving grade level regarding specific student medical and/or special instructional needs.

The administrative and support staff organized which classrooms would switch with each other, how the 5th grade students would be grouped for their community based project, and assigned staff members to the 5th grade student groups (see attached schedule and assignments). The parent liaison developed and distributed flyers to notify parents about the swaps.

The administrative team monitored the student swaps by visiting classrooms to determine the effectiveness of the program and whether adjustments were necessary.

### Staffing Plan

Kindergarten through Grade 5 teachers prepared to teach the rising students for three days following the regular schedule. Pre-K, support staff, and administrators worked with 5th grade students (rising 6th graders) on community-based projects to prepare them for middle school. The guidance counselor and day-time tutors rotated amongst the various grade levels and provided transitional supports as needed; with a primary focus on students who had challenges transitioning and changing daily routines and procedures.

## **Measures of Effectiveness**

Teachers were provided the opportunity to have vertical conversations about the 3-day experience. The conversations were focused on students' instructional strengths and weaknesses. The outcome of the conversations resulted in the receiving teachers adjusting their instruction to address the needs of rising students, as well as sending teachers adjusting their instructional practices to ensure that identified weaknesses are addressed during the upcoming school year.

## **Early Results**

Teachers are proactively having vertical conversations about their instructional practices and students' needs prior to the opening of the school year. Teachers and students verbally expressed the benefits of the experience. In particular, building positive teacher-student relationships before the start of the new school year was appreciated.

## **Lessons Learned**

In planning, be mindful of other end of the year activities, events, and assessments. Also, be prepared for teachers to be resistant to changing their routines. Including them in the planning process helps relieve some of this anxiety.

## **Budget**

Implementing this strategy did not require any additional funding.

## **Plan for Scale Up, Phase Out, or Continuation**

The end of year student swap will be continued in the future.

## **Other Hints:**

- Part of the planning process should include reviewing the master schedule and end of the year calendar.

## **Attachments:**

- [Leadership team meeting agenda](#)
- [Swap schedule/assignments](#)

## **Contact Information**

Name: Danjile Henderson  
Title: Principal  
Email: [dhenderson@nps.k12.va.us](mailto:dhenderson@nps.k12.va.us)  
Phone: (757) 628-2577

## Prince Edward County High School: Establishing Culture of Transformation

**District:** Prince Edward County Public Schools

**District Type:** Rural

**School Level:** High (Grades 9–12)

### Description of Practice

At the beginning of the transformation process, information regarding the transformation process, benchmark data, SOL pass rates, and attendance was communicated to students through grade level assemblies. However, it was questionable whether or not students were attentive or receptive when this information was communicated. Additionally, the assemblies took time away from direct instruction. A member of the School Improvement Team (SIT) suggested that messages regarding school improvement and data be relayed through individual classes. A Power Point slide deck was created along with a guide for teachers. This information was communicated to students on the same day and during the same class period.

Students are the most critical stakeholders regarding school improvement. Just as teachers and administrators are provided data, students need to see data in regards to academic achievement and the culture of the school. Moreover, they should be given specific goals. Periodically, they should receive information on progress regarding these goals. The method of relaying this information to students should also be an on-going process.

### Implementation Steps

- I. Create transformation message that outlines:
  - Why the school is in transformation
  - School wide goals
  - Current benchmark data
  - Attendance data
  - Graduation data
- II. Create guide to ensure that teachers all gave the same message to students regarding transformation and the school's progress. However, there was an emphasis that teachers could say the message differently. Teachers were encouraged to use their own individual voices and relationships with students to communicate the message.
- III. Have key stakeholders review the plan and the guide, including:
  - Principal's advisory committee (students)
  - School Improvement Team
  - Central Office Staff
- IV. Designate a time to convey the message in all classrooms.

## **Staffing Plan**

Teachers were expected to communicate the transformation message on the same day and during same class period. Administrators monitored the process.

## **Measures of Effectiveness**

School climate data identified changes in teacher empowerment and satisfaction.

## **Early Results**

Several teachers indicated that they felt more part of school improvement after this initiative. They also reported that students were more engaged in student achievement data regarding academic achievement. Several teachers also indicated that this activity helped them better understand transformation. Specific data points comparing the 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years show:

- A 28% increase – teachers are centrally involved in decision-making about important educational issues
- A 7% increase – teachers have a role in school improvement planning
- A 13% increase – teachers are held to high professional standards for delivering instruction
- A 29% increase – teachers receive feedback based on evaluations that can help them improve instruction
- A 29 % increase – school leaders make a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about empowerment
- A 34% - overall my school is a good place to work and learn

## **Lessons Learned**

While the students were the focus of the transformation message program, teacher empowerment and satisfaction was also impacted.

## **Budget**

Implementing this strategy did not require any additional funding.

## **Plan for Scale Up, Phase Out, or Continuation**

A transformation message will be provided at the beginning of each year and every six weeks.

## **Attachments:**

- [Transformation message PowerPoint](#)
- [Teacher's Guide](#)

**Contact Information**

Name: Craig Reed  
Title: Principal  
Email: craig.reed@pecps.k12.va.us  
Phone: (434) 315-2130

Name: Wanda Walker  
Title: Internal Lead Transformation  
Monitor  
Email: wanda.walker@pecps.k12.va.us  
Phone: (434) 315-2130

DRAFT

## Thompson Middle School: Building a Values-Based School Community

**District:** Richmond City Public Schools

**District Type:** Urban

**School Level:** Middle (Grades 6–8)

### Description of Practice

We regularly consider how a school sustains an ethos, which supports the pupil as a reflective learner and promotes quality teaching and learning. We are also very aware that our society is faced with enormously complicated problems, which makes growing up a very difficult and sometimes stressful process. Students are unfortunately inundated with negative messages, which negatively affect their mental and emotional development. As a result, some students find it difficult to listen attentively and to focus fully on their school work. Social relationships then begin to suffer as the student fails to understand that building meaningful relationships is their responsibility.

Keeping those things in mind, one of the goals of Thompson was to identify and exemplify good practices in “values education.” Research shows that an effective school is one generally characterized by a remarkable and positive culture. Consequently, Thompson’s leadership team, in a planned and systematic manner, decided to implement EdisonLearning’s eight Core Values in everything we did, every day, and in every way we could. Understanding that it takes discipline and diligence to create a positive, sustained, and nurturing culture, the Thompson staff was determined to make these values a central part of the school community. We knew before we started -- and it was emphasized as we progressed through the process -- that core values represent the heart of any school.

We established a school-wide code and explicitly attempted to connect it to a set of shared traditions, norms, and values. The school-wide endeavor, intentionally implemented, underpins positive language, attitudes and behavior within the school. EdisonLearning’s Core Values of Wisdom, Courage, Justice, Hope, Respect, Responsibility, Respect and Integrity provide a clearly defined set of operational values that are supported and modeled throughout the school community. The implementation of this school-wide code assisted with teaching students to be deliberate about their actions. It also provided students guidance and resources to think and care about good character and their own character development. Additionally, it gives students opportunities to put their intentions into practice and provides instructional supports that nurture character development.

Understanding that the purpose of the school is to provide the best education possible for all students, we knew certain basic standards of behavior were required. Teachers set, explained and posted classroom expectations and quiet signs were used in the halls during transition times. Having the ability to quiet students down quickly and effectively adds more time to instruction and reduces the likelihood of safety issues. The signs, in particular, make it possible for us to teach students the importance of learning in a safe, orderly, and healthy environment where courtesy and respect for others are important.

Lastly, the strategy of using classroom greeters was introduced and well received. This strategy is designed to give each student in the classroom an opportunity to greet and welcome visitors. The greeter introduces him or herself to the visitor, explains the learning objective, and describes the focus of the day's lesson. The concept of using greeters makes visitors feel welcomed and helps them understand what's going on in the classroom, and teaches students responsibility, communication skills, and social skills.

### **Implementation Steps**

At the beginning of the year, all teachers, staff and students received extensive training on EdisonLearning's Core Values. Teachers received instructional supports and materials designed to assist with direct and embedded instruction and grade level and departmental teams used these supports to plan and coordinate instructional goals. Opportunities for students to positively apply the Core Values were emphasized and special events and celebrations were held throughout the school year to promote the values and connect them to school climate/culture expectations. Further, core values were included in various printed documents and emphasized in home-school communications.

Other implementation steps include:

- Introducing the values in an assembly. One value is highlighted each month. An assembly is then devoted to explaining the value in a way appropriate to the age and stage of the pupil. Staff members also gain a deepening of their own understanding by taking part in such assemblies.
- Asking each teacher to prepare one value lesson each month that will build on the assembly. A variety of inclusive teaching and learning styles should be used to ensure that all pupils are engaged in the thinking process.
- Implicitly merging values into every facet of the school culture and to encourage teachers to use the value of the month in their work with pupils.
- Displaying the value of the month in a prominent place in the school.
- Sending newsletters to parents explaining what the value of the month is and how they can develop them at home.

### **Staffing Plan**

The EdisonLearning team provided professional development to the teachers and administrators that included: introducing the Core Values, and creating learning spaces that are conducive to a variety of learning needs and pedagogical approaches. The intentional planning of school-wide and classroom displays that demonstrate learning, progress and achievement were enforced with administrators, teachers and staff. Administrators conducted classroom walk-throughs with a focus on the implementation of Core Value activities across the curriculum. The EdisonLearning team and administrative team will continue to monitor core value activities throughout the school.

## **Measures of Effectiveness**

In order to determine effectiveness, we monitor the number and type of referrals received in the main office, and hold frank conversations with staff members on a regular basis. We also review the number and frequency of suspensions and have discussions about our progress during our monthly Alliance meetings (with EdisonLearning).

## **Early Results**

The introduction of the core values has helped teachers provide direct instruction in character education with discussion and practice in all curriculum areas. The emphasis on the values exemplified the need to establish and maintain school and classroom behavioral norms and expectations. Teachers and students are using a common language to identify values, norms and expectations and special events and recognitions are held throughout the school to promote our values based strategy.

## **Lessons Learned**

- We learned that values cannot be taught in isolation, but the school can provide experiences and situations in which the school community can consider and reflect on values and translate this reflection into action in the lives. In order to do this the school needs to provide, in a conscious deliberate way, for the implicit and explicit consideration of values.
- A set of shared values must become an integral part of the school community.
- Direct instruction on the values during the first few weeks of school helps set the tone for the remainder of the year.
- Teachers should facilitate mini-lessons around shared values throughout the year to remind, reinforce and redirect student behavior expectations.
- It takes discipline and attentiveness to create a positive culture and to infuse the core values in everything we did.

## **Budget**

This strategy does not require a budget, with the exception of the purchase of small incentives and rewards for students and who exemplify core values. SIG and Title I funds are used to support the initiative.

## **Plan for Scale Up, Phase Out, or Continuation**

The Core Values are only as strong as the values the team. To impact and sustain a positive school culture, Thompson's staff places value on learner voice through a range of intentional practices that provide opportunities for students to demonstrate high levels of engagement and motivation, to take ownership of their learning, and to act as change agents. The school will maintain regular recognition of the EdisonLearning Core Values to support the implementation of a school wide management plan that underpins positive

language, attitudes, and behavior within school. The school leadership team will encourage and develop an incentive program that celebrates student and teacher success.

**Attachments:**

- [Core Values Reflection Journal](#)
- [Core Values Role Play](#)
- [Core Values Schedule of Activities, 2011-2012](#)
- [Core Values Writing Exercise](#)

**Contact Information**

Name: Victoria Oakley  
Title: Chief Academic Officer  
Email: [voakley@richmond.k12.va.us](mailto:voakley@richmond.k12.va.us)  
Phone: (804) 780-7727

Name: Dionne Ward  
Title: Turnaround Manager  
Email: [dward@richmond.k12.va.us](mailto:dward@richmond.k12.va.us)  
Phone: (804) 385-6116

Name: Rickie Hopkins  
Title: Principal  
Email: [rhopkins@richmond.k12.va.us](mailto:rhopkins@richmond.k12.va.us)  
Phone: (804) 272-7554

DRAFT

## **Data-Based Decision-Making**

### **AP Hill Elementary School: Cougar Stats**

**District:** Petersburg City Public Schools

**District Type:** Urban

**School Level:** Elementary (Grades K–5)

#### **Description of Practice**

There were three indicators that A.P. Hill needed a method for incorporating data use in the school's daily practices. First, the collection of student achievement data indicated that students were experiencing difficulty in the areas of reading and math across grade levels. Secondly, it was clear that teachers did not have a thorough understanding of how to use data to improve student achievement. Many of the instructional staff believed that a once a week team meeting to discuss what standards should be taught for the following week merited "team planning." There was very little reflection/discussion of student data by teachers, which implied that we needed to refocus the teacher's beliefs and thinking about data. Finally, according to the instructional staff, staff development was sporadic and often irrelevant to the needs of teachers and students. Therefore, we needed a process to encourage data-driven decision-making structures to inform teaching and learning, routine collection and analysis of formal and informal student assessments and other data, data team planning to maximize student progress, individual and collaborative data analysis protocols, including routine goal setting and data-driven action planning and instruction. The resulting practice is called "Cougar Stats."

"Cougar Stats" provides a framework for instructors, administrators, tutors, and students; allowing for an understanding of students' achievement data. "Cougar Stats" is a combination of individual student assessment data, class/subject item analysis, dialogue during professional learning community meetings, and current/projected class/grade level percentages arranged by tiers and group identifiers (i.e., Small Learning Communities, Remediation Recovery, SPED/504, etc.).

"Cougar Stats" gives all parties an opportunity to study, reflect, and discuss the current status of individual students, student areas of concern/strength, overall class success rates, plans of action, regroupings for small learning communities, teacher areas of concern/strength, and areas that may warrant professional development. This structured plan allows all parties the opportunity to identify and provide the support needed to improve student achievement collaboratively and consistently.

#### **Implementation Steps**

After several grade level (PLC) and leadership team meetings, a consensus determined that more focused, training, and study of data was needed. Administrators, with the input of our external lead partner, EdisonLearning, collectively implemented the following steps:

- After each assessment (benchmark, “cold reads”, diagnostic, etc.) the homeroom teacher disaggregates the data by completing an item analysis for each student assessed.
- Grade level PLC’s meet with administrators, Title I staff, and/or EdisonLearning to discuss the current data and compare it with previous related areas. Trend data is reviewed by Title I staff and shared with the teams to connect current and previous academic progress.
- Each teacher’s name and class listing is listed on a white board and arranged by subject/assessment.
- Students names are then plotted in tiers (green – 80%+, blue – 61-79%, red – 60% & below).
- Once all names have been placed in tiers, students are color-coded based on receipt of services from the following: small learning communities, after-school tutoring, day tutoring, and/or SPED/504.
- Class percentages are calculated with an overall percentage, and a percentage minus any students who qualify as SOA.
- Once all calculations are made, projections are then determined for each teacher and grade level as to where they currently stand in regards to meeting expectations, and how many students are expected to move into the next tier by the next assessment.
- The described data is posted in the Data Room where PLC meetings are held.

Once all data is reviewed, the team begins a plan of action that begins with the classroom teacher performing the first intervention during the “teacher’s station.”

- Small learning communities are formed, which are led by the Title I team.
- Students are assigned to small learning communities, tutors, after-school tutoring, etc.
- This process is repeated during each PLC meeting.
- The administration and EdisonLearning monitor the instructional delivery and student engagement through classroom walk-through observations.

### **Staffing Plan**

- Administrators provide a common and uninterrupted block of time for grade levels to meet, assist with disaggregation and interpretation of data.
- Classroom teachers provide center-based instruction, review data, complete “Item Analysis”, 1<sup>st</sup> form of intervention, monitor services students receive, attend staff development training, and follow through with the plan of action discussed.
- Title I Reading and Math Facilitators/Instructional Specialists provide remediation and facilitates small learning communities.
- External Lead Turnaround Partner (EdisonLearning) – Provides/Reviews data, provides on-going and on-site staff development on the use of data and best instructional practices in reading and math, coaches staff on instructional delivery/student engagement, and conducts requested demonstration lessons.

## Measures of Effectiveness

The Administration and EdisonLearning conduct daily walk-through observations. Student data is reviewed showing tier movement and percentile growth. Small Learning Community group sizes are also monitored, and indicated that the groups became smaller as the school year progressed.

Additional measures include:

- Daily classroom data walls
- School-wide data wall
- Weekly PLC meeting with emphasis on “Cougar Stats”
- Weekly PLC agendas and sign-in sheets
- Monthly EdisonLearning eValuate
- Monthly iStation assessment
- Quarterly PALs assessment
- Quarterly benchmarks

## Early Results

- The size of the Community of Learners decreased over the course of the year.
- The school’s Math eValuate average increased from 57% in January to 70% (13% gain) in April.
- In January, 41% of third-graders met the math threshold of 65% on eValuate as compared to 43% in April; 42% of fourth-graders met the math threshold of 62% in January as compared to 81% in April; and 20% of fifth-graders met the math threshold of 62% in January as compared to 79% in April.
- The school’s eValuate reading averages increased from 49% in January to 61% (12% gain) in April.
- In January, 19% of third-graders met the reading threshold of 62% on eValuate as compared to 13% in April, 9% of fourth-graders met the reading threshold of 70% in January compared to 60% in April; and 21% of fifth- graders met the reading threshold of 70% in January compared to 42% in April.
- In May, 2012 students took district administered mock SOL assessment in reading and math in lieu of eValuate in preparation for SOL. The following data was recorded:
  - In reading, 63% of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders met the 65% cut score, 79% of 4<sup>th</sup> graders met the 63% cut score, and 78% of 5<sup>th</sup> graders met the 68% cut score.
  - In math, 52% of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders met the 65% cut score, 80% of 4<sup>th</sup> graders met the 62% cut score, and 74% of 5<sup>th</sup> graders met the cut score of 62%.

## Lessons Learned

- Do not assume teachers understand how to use data.
- Provide your entire staff with professional development and readings that can help strengthen their comfort level and understanding of how to use data to drive their own instruction.

- Data disaggregation takes time to understand, but a plan of action should always be created once you have completed the analysis.

### **Budget**

- Day-time tutors: \$60,750.00 (Source of funding: SIG & PALS)
- iStation subscription: \$6,500.00 (Source of funding: SIG)
- White Boards: \$1094.97 (Source of funding: Instructional/Title I)

### **Plan for Scale Up, Phase Out, or Continuation**

After having an opportunity to reflect on the strategy, “Cougar Stats” will continue and will be expanded to all grade levels. This requires the purchase of an additional five white boards. Additional components to “Cougar Stats” will be added:

- To ensure that all stakeholders understand our data, students will be provided data folders to collect and track their individual data in graph form.
- A class picture folder will also be created for each class. The picture folder will be divided into the three tiers (red, blue, and green), the student’s picture will be placed in the tier he/she falls in for that particular assessment period. Dots will be placed on the picture to show other identifying information. This picture folder will assist with helping administrators, Title I, and EdisonLearning to identify students during walk-through observations. These folders will be kept by classroom teachers and shared only with the Leadership Team.

### **Attachments:**

- [School Meeting Agenda](#)
- [Item Analysis Form](#)

### **Contact Information**

Name: Tonya Shelton  
Title: Principal  
Email: toshelton@petersburg.k12.va.us  
Phone: (804) 861-3765

## Armstrong High School: Using Student Data – A Collaborative Approach

**District:** Richmond City Schools

**District Type:** Urban

**School Level:** High (Grades 9–12)

### Description of Practice

Irrefutably, analyzing data plays a major role in school improvement. Consequently, the requirement for teachers and instructional leaders to comprehend and use classroom-based, standardized and other types of assessments is greater than ever. Because the emphasis on accountability is rooted in data, the Armstrong team decided to bring student learning data to the Alliance team (a team comprised of department chairs, district level instructional specialists, parents, community advocates, and administrators). We determined that if we were going to hold students accountable, we must also hold teachers and principals accountable for data that is accurate, informs instruction, and is used to guide and design student interventions and enrichment.

Alliance meetings are held monthly and everyone agrees to certain norms, i.e., must be present at each meeting on time, no use of phones, respect everyone's opinion, begin and end on time, etc. The purpose of the meetings is to review all types of data: student, teacher, grade level, class, reading, remedial groups, graduation cohort, discipline, attendance and truancy, and others. In utilizing data-driven instruction, teachers utilize an objective, scientific research-based process for making instructional decisions based on student mastery levels as determined by: pretests, posttests, bi-weekly, and benchmark assessments. The practice promotes student-centered learning and provides a framework for the intentional remediation of student learners by identifying specific skill subsets that require additional support. Communication among team members is critical and progress monitoring is used extensively. Instructional practices and techniques are examined and discussed, and realistic goals are set.

### Implementation Steps

One of the challenges of any new endeavor is time. A schedule was established for the team to meet each month to analyze assessment data and make instructional decisions to improve student achievement. Teachers were coached individually and in small groups on the process of disaggregating and interpreting data to plan large and small group differentiated instruction aligned with students' developmental levels and learning needs. Based on student achievement data, activities, materials and content were designed to reflect explicit planning for students' differing levels and skills, including pre-teaching (acceleration), remediation and adaptation of assignments. Overall, the process included the following steps:

1. Identify members for the team
2. Discuss expectations
3. Train teachers on analyzing data
4. Determine the method that will be used for reporting

5. Develop a monthly agenda in advance
6. Collect, sort and select data to be discussed at each meeting
7. Build and analyze the data
8. Set and prioritize goals
9. Discuss and select effective practices
10. Discuss and request additional resources, if needed
11. Discuss next steps
12. Monitor implementation of the plan
13. Communicate the results to all stakeholders
14. Reflect, learn, and repeat the process

### **Staffing Plan**

The teacher leaders, central office staff, EdisonLearning staff, and administrators manage and oversee this practice. The EdisonLearning team and Richmond Public School specialists collaboratively provided individualized professional development for data disaggregation. Additionally, the process of disaggregating data, developing remediation/intervention plans and reassessing student learning was modeled for department chairs as a strategy to support them provide assistance to colleagues. A “Plan, Do, Check and Act” cycle is emphasized as part of the continuous improvement model to ensure change at the classroom level and positive impacts on student learning.

The Turnaround Manager serves as the facilitator of the meetings and a note taker is defined. A formal agenda and various reports are sent to team members in advance so that members can be well prepared for the meeting. The results of the meeting are then typed and sent to the entire faculty so that everyone knows the successes and challenges of where we are in school improvement.

### **Measures of Effectiveness**

When we discuss progress, or the lack thereof, we agreed that our decision must be based on data, not an interpretation of progress. To effectively do this, progress monitoring was used to assess the academic performance for each teacher and content area. We also evaluated the effectiveness of instruction and the strategies used for intervention. Progress monitoring was an essential component of RTI (Response to Intervention), but more work is needed around working with teachers to fully understand the steps and best practices of RtI.

While we attempted to monitor student progress, measure the responsiveness to instruction, and adjust the required intensity of instruction and intervention, we were not as successful as we would have preferred, particularly in the area of math. Next year, we will more closely monitor the process and look attentively at the following: the specific interventions being used; if they are implemented with fidelity; if the teacher is using the right materials; and, if the student is assigned to the proper class.

## **Early Results**

The earliest indicators of success have been found in the transformation of pedagogy and assessments for learning. Teachers initiated the process of utilizing small collaborative groups to remediate and provide enrichment for learners. Observers are seeing evidence of teachers actively planning using student performance data as a basis for adjusting instructional practices. Assessments are used to check student progress and adjust instruction. Individualized plans are being developed for students to increase performance levels. Tutors are also utilizing the data to provide remediation for students in specific areas. Intervention and remediation efforts are more focused and intentional. Many students are also charting their data and taking more responsibility for their own learning.

Unfortunately, there were a few barriers that impeded maximum progress, such as:

- Problems with data collection or reporting systems,
- Lack of preparation and lack of time,
- The inability of some teachers to effectively use data to improve student achievement, and
- Teachers pre-existing beliefs about the use of data or their skills.

Overall, this strategy proved successful, as evident by passing rates in all content areas on the Standards of Learning test, fewer suspensions and expulsions, a higher graduation rate, and increased community support. Because all types of data were collected and reviewed frequently, we were able to focus our teaching priorities across the school and make changes as needed.

## **Lessons Learned**

Several lessons were learned this year using this strategy. Some are listed below:

- Reviewing large amounts of data at one time doesn't work.
- The team needed to have time to build our capacity to review the data, interpret the data, formulate questions about the data, and formulate a plan to change the results for the next assessment.
- Teachers need additional training on deciding what data are useful to their investigation. Teachers differ in their understanding of what data are beneficial and how data should be used.
- Teachers need additional training on how to link data results to school planning and the decision-making processes.
- To ensure the on-going process of data driving instructional decisions, the analysis of achievement data must contribute to the teachers' performance management. The culture of the school should reflect all teachers using multiple strategies to assess achievement using consistent criteria and routinely building these into lessons to check progress and inform planning.

## **Budget**

No budget is needed for this strategy except small incentives to reward teachers and students for achieving excellence. These incentives were purchased using SIG and Title 1 funds.

## **Plan for Scale Up, Phase Out, or Continuation**

The administrators and teachers will continue to emphasize the analysis of data to inform instructional decisions through Alliance meetings. While reviewing lesson plans and conducting formal and informal classroom observations, the administrators will continue to require teachers to provide evidence that data is being used to make instructional decisions. Teachers will continue to develop skills in analyzing data and translating their inferences into planning and teaching.

Additionally, we will:

- Develop professional learning communities focused on reviewing and interpreting data for the purpose of improving student achievement,
- Review and revise the process of data investigation that results in improved student achievement, and
- Induct new teachers into a data-based decision-making culture by linking them with veteran teachers who have experience in using data to enhance student achievement.

## **Other Hints:**

You must select committed team members who are willing to share openly and accept suggestions.

## **Attachments:**

- [Data Binder Cover & Table of Contents](#)
- [Remediation Record](#)
- [Guidelines on Using Data Walls in the Classroom, “Walls that Talk” PowerPoint](#)

## **Contact Information**

Name: Victoria Oakley  
Title: Chief Academic Officer  
Email: [voakley@richmond.k12.va.us](mailto:voakley@richmond.k12.va.us)  
Phone: (804) 780-7727

Name: Dionne Ward  
Title: Turnaround Manager  
Email: [dward@richmond.k12.va.us](mailto:dward@richmond.k12.va.us)  
Phone: (804) 385-6116

Name: April Hawkins  
Title: Principal  
Email: [ahawkins@richmond.k12.va.us](mailto:ahawkins@richmond.k12.va.us)  
Phone: (804) 780-4449

## Lake Taylor Middle School: Grade Level Clusters

**District:** Norfolk Public Schools

**District Type:** Urban

**School Level:** Middle (Grades 6–8)

### Description of Practice

During the 2011-12 school year, Lake Taylor Middle School established clusters or teacher teams that worked with common groups of students. Creating small communities allowed staff to better serve the student body by providing teachers the opportunity to work in teams to address students' academic, attendance, and behavioral needs. Cluster teams used data from the Early Warning Indicators (EWI) system to identify students who were off-track in at least one of three key indicators related to attendance, behavior, and course performance. Interventions, such as conferences, after school tutoring, Saturday school, quarter recovery, and during the day remediation were used to address concerns for each identified student. Students' progress, as a result of the interventions, was monitored and discussed at follow-up meetings. If a student progressed satisfactorily, the student was removed from the EWI list.

### Implementation Steps

After clusters were organized, Johns Hopkins University (JHU) partners facilitated professional development sessions throughout the year to support implementation of the clustering model. Professional development facilitators trained teachers to develop an organizational structure and process that included cluster norms, attendance plans, and tiered interventions. During cluster meetings, data from the EWI system was used to identify students who were off-track in at least one of three key indicators. Interventions were discussed and assigned to address the needs of these students.

During follow-up meetings, new data was reviewed to monitor the progress of students previously identified and to determine if there were new students requiring additional supports to be successful.

The principal and the school transformation facilitator reviewed data bi-weekly to monitor the fidelity of implementation, as well as the effectiveness of the strategies in meeting students' needs.

At the end of each grading interim and quarter, students' progress reports were reviewed, and students who were doing well or had shown progress in meeting goals received incentives for grades, attendance, and conduct. Incentives included: gift cards, movie tickets, ice cream and cookie coupons, laser tag tickets, dances, and school paraphernalia. Students in danger of failing received support to ensure they would pass the quarter or recover the quarter.

## Staffing Plan

Data was collected bi-weekly and analyzed by the principal, school transformation facilitator, and cluster leaders. The principal monitored program effectiveness by monitoring teachers' grade books, common formative assessments, benchmark assessments, quarterly course grades, discipline infractions, and attendance rates. The school transformation facilitator coordinated bi-monthly cluster meetings and monitored implementation of strategies. Teacher leader roles were assigned among faculty/staff. These roles were defined as cluster leader, time keeper, recorder, group facilitator, and champion.

## Measures of Effectiveness

Data was collected was analyzed bi-weekly by the principal, school transformation facilitator, and cluster leaders. Various data sources analyzed include:

- Informal and formal assessments
- Progress reports
- Report cards
- Discipline infractions
- Attendance rates

## Early Results

Table 1

Quarter	# of Students with Off Track Performance	# of Students with On Track Performance
1	135	815
2	198	752
3	301	649
4	2	950

## Lessons Learned

Teachers working collectively to identify effective instructional and behavioral interventions to address students' needs and strategies that foster positive parental relationships strengthened the clusters.

## Budget

The school transformation facilitator, which is a SIG grant-funded position, was instrumental in assisting staff in using the EWI system to identify students who required additional support to be successful in school. Staff who participated in professional development after normal contract hours received compensation, which was supported by

SIG funding. The seven clusters also spent \$2000.00 each on extrinsic rewards for students, and these rewards were also supported through SIG funding.

### **Plan for Scale Up, Phase Out, or Continuation**

To further support the cluster model, the faculty and administration reconfigured the entire scheduling matrix and teachers' room assignments for the 2012-13 school year. Faculty will receive ongoing professional development to support the cluster model and use of data from the EWI system.

Efforts will be documented through Indistar, agendas, and attendance logs. JHU will continue to provide templates and input as the year progresses.

### **Other Hints:**

Students participated in report card conferences each quarter and received positive and constructive feedback on progress. Students were very receptive to the report card conferences. This allowed the students the opportunity to speak with a faculty member regarding any academic concerns, as well as the option to speak with the teacher in the subject(s) of concern. Report card conferences gave students a voice and an opportunity to know that a faculty member supported their success.

### **Attachments:**

- [Team Meeting Roles](#)
- [Agenda](#)
- [Intervention Identification Protocol](#)
- [Tracking Our Conversations](#)
- [Cluster Team Activity](#)
- [Attendance Plan](#)

### **Contact Information**

Name: Lynnell Gibson  
Title: Principal  
Email: [lgibson@nps.k12.va.us](mailto:lgibson@nps.k12.va.us)  
Phone: (757) 892-3230

Name: Nathaniel Morris  
Title: School Transformation Facilitator  
Email: [nmorris@nps.k12.va.us](mailto:nmorris@nps.k12.va.us)  
Phone: (757) 892-3230

## Peabody Middle School: Principal-Led Data Conferences

**District:** Petersburg City Public Schools

**District Type:** Rural

**School Level:** Middle (6–7)

### Description of Practice

With the advent of federally and state-mandated school accountability, school districts have employed increasingly complex data systems to provide schools with numerical representations of nearly every aspect of tested student performance. An unintended side effect of this inundation of data is that many schools and school systems have become data rich, but information poor. At a time when schools have more data than ever on which to base curriculum and instruction decisions, they are often paralyzed into inaction because of the overwhelming volume of data, and the time involved in sorting and extracting meaningful information from the data.

In an effort to address the volume of data, Peabody Middle School developed Principal-Led Data Conferences, which are held with content area teachers at beginning of the school year, and the end of each grading period. Teachers are required to compile and discuss the following data elements:

- Quarterly Grades
- List of students failing to make progress and/or meet grade standards and narrative explanation for the failure to progress
- Most recent benchmark scores
- Trend data over time (6 months to a year)
- Attendance data
- Discipline/referral data

### Implementation Steps

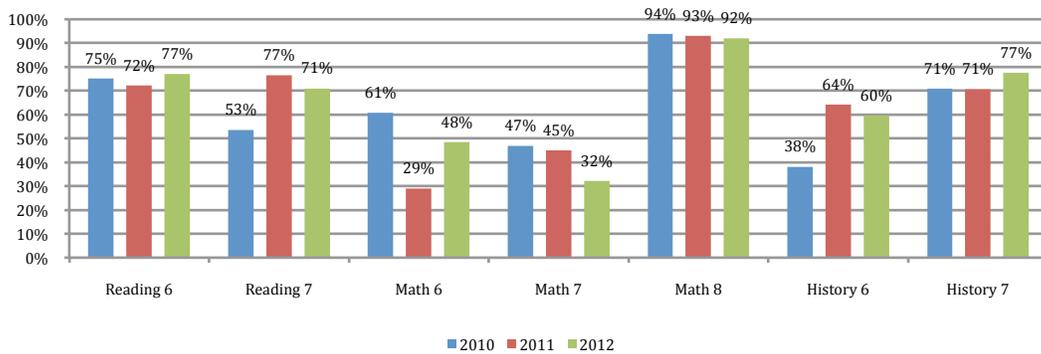
The current Principal-Led Data Conferences practice grew out of an initiative that was started by the school division, and enhanced by Cambridge Education, our Lead Turnaround Partner.

- In Fall 2011, the director of secondary education provided principals with a template for a data notebook that was to be compiled with the previously listed data elements, along with the school's updated Indistar plan.
- Once the document notebook was compiled, copies were made for the members of the school leadership team, but handling the large binders and the time and expense of duplicating them was an impediment to having them become "living documents" that teachers used to modify and improving their teaching practices.
- Cambridge proposed converting the notebooks to a fully electronic format that combined the key data elements of course grades, year-to-year benchmark assessments (trend data), and academic growth by cohort comparisons into a

Power Point presentation format using Excel-created graphs that compared student performance across content areas and over the course of the school year.

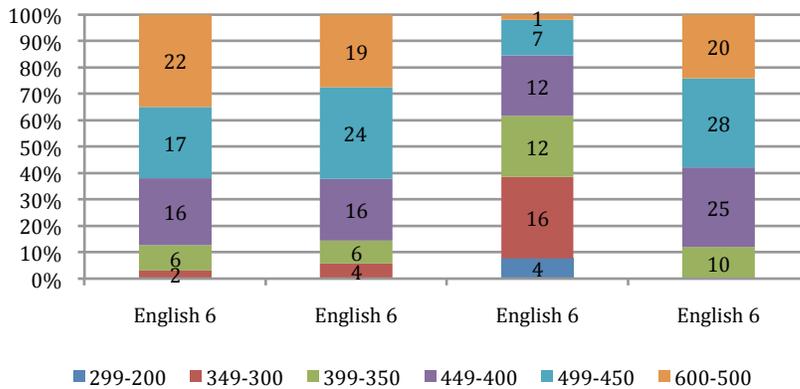
The following are examples of the resulting charts that were produced using the compiled data.

**Table 1. Three-year Trend Data\***



\*Including SOL and benchmark data.

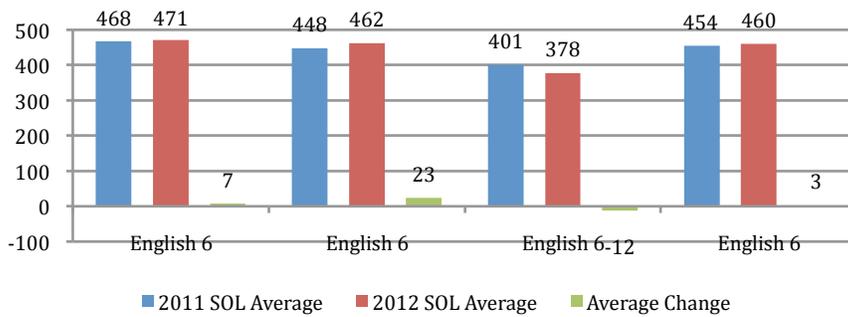
**Table 2. Analysis of SOL and Benchmark Data by Performance Bands**



**Table 3. Comparison of Benchmarks with Quarterly Grades**

Teacher	A	B	C	D	F	Totals	% C or Better	% Passing Benchmark	Difference
English 7	3	37	35	31	4	110	68%	67 %	1
Math 6	11	31	20	12	1	75	83%	57%	26
Science 6	8	29	25	11	1	74	84%	72%	12
History 7	2	23	34	30	15	104	57%	85%	-28
Science 6	19	26	25	5	4	79	89%	61%	28
Math 7	0	37	44	19	18	118	69%	69%	0
Math 6	15	25	21	11	6	78	78%	78%	0

**Table 4. Comparison of Student Academic Growth**



### Implementation Steps

Basic implementation steps included:

- Creating the data tables shown above and they were used as the basis of the data conversations.
- Having the principal meet with teachers by cross-curricular teams and content area departments to review the data charts and discuss the “whys” behind the numbers.
- Having the teachers articulate the factors that produced the results and propose actions for continuing or discontinuing specific actions in the classroom based on the results.

After the initial conferences at the start of the year and at the end of the first grading period, the conferences became teacher-led conferences as teachers became more comfortable and confident with the data, the principal shifted from leader to facilitator and the teachers grew stronger in their ability to use the data to change their teaching practices for improved student performance. For example, making the linkage between planning, student engagement, attendance, discipline, and student performance.

In May, these data talks were incorporated into the monthly Alternate Governance meetings, and teachers whose data was lagging behind the achievement of other teachers were called in to discuss their data with the school and central office administrator, as well as with the VDOE representative. These meetings were not designed to be a “gotcha,” but rather present teachers as professionals who have a strong understanding of the factors that contribute to student achievement, and how addressing these factors effectively leads to improved performance.

### Staffing Plan

The roles in the process are very clear-cut and all persons work together for the effective implementation of the data conferences. The roles in the process are as follows:

- **Data Captain** - This individual needs to have access to Pearson Access to pull down data and develop data charts and graphs for the data conferences.

Cambridge staff served in this capacity this year, and the role will transition to two staff members.

- **School Administrator** - This can be the principal or assistant principal (ideally a person who supervises teachers) who will hold teachers accountable for the data results and changes (or lack thereof) over the course of the year.
- **Content Area Teacher** - Responsible for compiling and submitting grade distribution sheets, attendance and discipline data, and narrative explanation of factors contributing to students' failure to make progress.

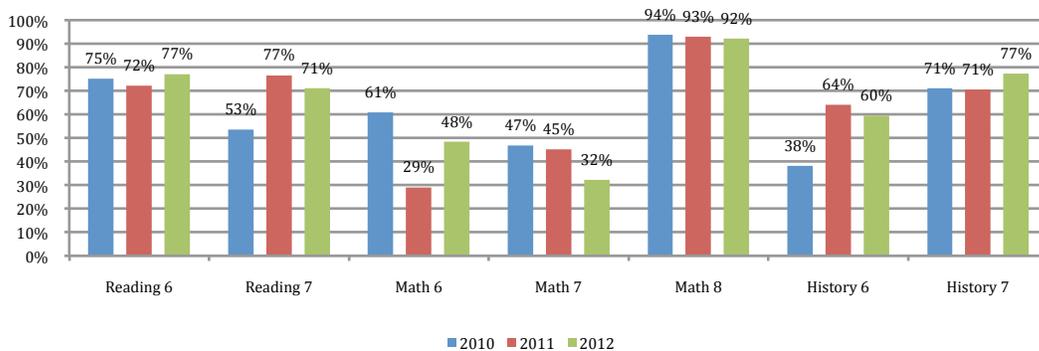
## Measures of Effectiveness

Student performance was used to measure the effectiveness of the use of data.

## Early Results

Early results can be seen in the trend data chart of each of the SOL-tested content areas. As shown in the chart, there have been improvements in student performance from 2011 to 2012, since the implementation of the data conversations strategy. Anecdotally, the level of teacher conversation around student performance has been raised and teachers speak more confidently of their ability to use data to modify their teaching practices in order to reach all learners.

**Table 5. Overall Performance Trends**



## Lessons Learned

For others starting a similar endeavor, it is critical that this is a principal-led process. It is imperative that a principal ensures accountability and strong implementation, especially if teachers have not been regularly using data to change their teaching practices or if they are resistant to change. Teachers much know that each quarter they will be held accountable for their students' progress or lack thereof, and understanding the resulting data.

## **Budget**

The only cost for the practice is the fee paid by the school division for data services provided by an external partner for the SOL data. Benchmarks are produced by the instructional coaches and administered through the schools ScanTron system. This would need to be purchased if schools do not already have the equipment and student scan sheets.

## **Plan for Scale Up, Phase Out, or Continuation**

The role of data captain will be taken over by members of the Peabody staff, and the remaining roles are current staff members and will be maintained. The district will continue to fund the use of an external vendor as a data administrator for SOL and the cost for resupplying ScanTron documents is negligible. Therefore, continuation of the process after the conclusion of SIG funding will not be problematic.

## **Other Hints:**

The following are recommended books for schools looking to initiate or expand a data conversation process:

- *Data Wise A Step-by-Step Guide to Using Assessment Results to Improve Teaching and Learning*. Edited by Kathryn Parker Boudett, Elizabeth City, and Richard Murnane, 2005.
- *Data Wise in Action Stories of Schools Using Data to Improve Teaching and Learning* . Edited by Kathryn Parker Boudett and Jennifer L. Steele, Dec 2007

## **Contact Information**

Phone: Yardley Farquharson

Title: Principal

Email: yafarquharson@petersburg.k12.va.us

Phone: (804) 479-6758

## Prince Edward County High School: Graduation Initiative

**District:** Prince Edward County Public Schools

**District Type:** Rural

**School Level:** High (Grades 9–12)

### Description of Practice

At the start of the 2011-12 school year, Prince Edward County High School was identified as a provisionally accredited school because of an 81% Graduate Completer Index (GCI). As a result, a school wide initiative to increase the on time graduation rate was created. This plan addresses the graduation rate in both verified credits and failures.

### Implementation Steps

- During the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter (six-week periods), and over the summer, the Student Support Specialist created a list failing students and the corresponding teachers.
- Administrators immediately set up individual meetings with these teachers and devised plans for each student to pass their course.
- Administrators also had conferences with the students and parents.
- These students were required to have a certain amount of hours of remediation in order to re-take the SOL.
- Multiple opportunities were provided during the day and after school for these students to receive remediation.

### Staffing Plan

- The guidance department reviews student performance data to develop the target student list.
- The student support specialist creates a list of student failures each quarter by teacher name.
- Each six-weeks, the teacher contacts the parent, of each targeted failing student. This should be completed prior to the second week of the next grading period.
- Each six-weeks, the primary evaluator reviews the list of students who failed and the dates that the parent was contacted and holds a conference with each senior who has failed classes.
- Guidance Counselors and the Student Support Specialist hold conferences with each underclassman that has failed classes.

### Measures of Effectiveness

Student performance and recovery is the most important measure of effectiveness. Also, if a teacher continuously has a high failure rate each six-week period, then this teacher is provided with instructional support from administrators.

## Early Results

- One of our goals this year was to provide a nurturing environment, in which students understood that their success was the primary goal of our school. The students in danger of failing a class immediately knew that this was a concern.
- Moreover, it was clear to them that several individuals (administrators, other teachers, and guidance counselors) were monitoring them.
- All teachers began to understand:
  - How they contributed to the on time graduation rate. They began to understand that students needed to pass their classes in order to increase the on time graduation rate at the end of four years.
  - That all faculty members had to support our at-risk learners to increase the overall graduation rate.
- Two specific indicators suggest that this initiative is effective:
  - The Federal Graduation indicator increased from 66% to 72%.
  - The Graduate Completer Index (GCI) increased from 81% to 87%.

## Lessons Learned

PECHS implemented this initiative at during the 4<sup>th</sup> six-week period when it was clear that several seniors were in danger of not graduating because they were failing elective courses. However, in order maximize this program, during the 2012-13 school year, this will become part of our six-week data analysis progress and will begin at the beginning of the year. In addition, we will look at retentions each six-weeks at all grade levels (freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors). We will then address our issues of student retentions and on time graduation rate in a more pro-active manner.

## Budget

SIG funding covers the student support specialist position.

## Plan for Scale Up, Phase Out, or Continuation

The student support specialist led this initiative last year. This year, our Guidance Department will play a more instrumental role in monitoring student retentions and the on time graduation rate to build more capacity within the building.

## Attachments:

- [Six-Week Monitoring Plan](#)

## Contact Information

Name: Craig Reed  
Title: Principal  
Email: [craig.reed@pecps.k12.va.us](mailto:craig.reed@pecps.k12.va.us)  
Phone: (434) 315-2130

Name: Wanda Walker  
Title: Internal Lead Transformation Monitor  
Email: [wanda.walker@pecps.k12.va.us](mailto:wanda.walker@pecps.k12.va.us)  
Phone: (434) 315-2130

## Westside Elementary School: Sacred Tuesday Grade Level Meetings

**District:** Roanoke City Public Schools

**District Type:** Urban

**School Level:** Elementary (Grades K–5)

### Description of Practice

In order to address the need of student academic performance growth, Westside Elementary uses a Sacred Tuesday Grade Level Meeting program. Each Tuesday the Principal along with the Assistant Principal of Instruction meet with the teachers from each grade level and explore data, hold instruction discussions, and do grade level planning. This exploration of data leads to discussions about instruction and ultimately the planning of instruction across grade level. The intimate knowledge of each student's performance on assessments creates a feeling of grade level instructional ownership for each student. The administrators may also serve as a conduit of vertical planning each Tuesday and facilitate the meeting of multiple grade levels, when needed, to assure the success of the entire learning community.

### Implementation Steps

Sacred Tuesday begins with an agenda for each meeting that is shared with teachers prior to the meeting. The agenda foreshadows the next week's topic. The topics for each week are determined in response to student data, data from teacher observations, and school goals. The meetings are facilitated by the administrators with the goal being to utilize protocols so that there is equity of voice and safety to share instructional practices that are working and are supported by data. The teachers come together as a team in order to generate and facilitate the best possible solutions to increase student academic growth. The meetings are held in a designated data room to encourage discussions related to applicable data. There is a data wall that is maintained during meetings and shows student academic growth with assessment scores. The data for each student is kept throughout the year as a visual representation of the progress students are making. The data is generated at the meetings, by the teachers, in order to facilitate ownership of the student's performance.

### Staffing Plan

The Principal and Assistant Principal plan and facilitate each meeting. It is understood that other meetings are not scheduled on this day. The administrators discuss the weekly observations and data and how it relates to the school goals. The agenda items are determined in response to this discussion. It is a team process with no one member being any more important than the other. The goal is the academic growth of each student.

## **Measures of Effectiveness**

Summative data indicates that this practice has increased student achievement. The data is collected in regular intervals in order to show a trend of academic growth or not. With the successful implementation of Sacred Tuesday, the data should show academic growth and therefore be a measure of the progress. The intentional discussion about instructional data and instructional methods each week with all the instructional staff feeds back into the beginning of next week's Sacred Tuesday. Each week builds to the next, in terms of what is needed to drive instruction, and thus student academic growth, to the next level.

## **Early Results**

Tuesday grade level meetings are productive times. This meeting has become part of the culture of Westside. Teacher participation is expected and teacher buy in has been huge. The teachers have seen results with increased standardized test scoring. Teachers have an opportunity to meet each week and have the liberty to discuss best practices in a collaborative and safe environment.

## **Lessons Learned**

The integration of meetings on Tuesday needed a strong consistent commitment from the beginning. All other meetings including special education IEP meetings are scheduled other days. It is an expectation to attend each Sacred Tuesday meeting and there are very few, if any, exceptions. The agendas are critical in making this an intentional strategy. The creation and monitoring of long- and short-term goals also makes Sacred Tuesday more effective. Every teacher and administrator is a piece of the instructional pie that creates student growth.

## **Budget**

The cost, in terms of funding, is minimal, and includes the materials needed for the data boards including post it notes (pink, yellow, and red) and markers.

## **Plan for Scale Up, Phase Out, or Continuation**

The plan for scaling up and continuing includes the integration of long-term planning goals for whole school projects.

## **Other Hints:**

- The master schedule was created to give each grade level common planning time to allow for more collaboration.
- It is important to be consistent with the planning and implementation of Sacred Tuesday in order to have total buy in.
- The agenda for each week connects to Professional Teaching Standards and Transformation Indicators.

- The data boards are covered if the room is needed for parent meetings.

**Attachments:**

- [Sample Grade Level Meeting Agenda](#)
- [Photos of Data Wall](#)

**Contact Information**

Name: Jennifer Dean  
Title: Principal  
Email: [jdean@rcps.info](mailto:jdean@rcps.info)  
Phone: (540) 798-5879

DRAFT

## Instruction

### Fries School: Implementation of Reading and Math Instructional Coaches

**District:** Grayson County Public Schools

**District Type:** Rural

**School Level:** Other (Grades K–8)

#### Description of Practice

Reading and math instructional coaches were hired in an effort to assist the school with turnaround efforts. The reading and math coaches became a huge part of the team effort for improvement at Fries School. The instructional coaches were hired to assist teachers on-site daily and provide necessary resources, based on data, for improving instruction in the areas of reading and math.

#### Implementation Steps

Upon the hiring of the reading and math coach, a plan was put in place to provide effective high quality training to each coach. University instructors partnered with the district to implement an on-site training program for the instructional coaches. The trainers worked on-site with the instructional coaches an average of six days each month.

#### Staffing Plan

Reading and math instructional coaches duties are as follows:

- Observe and provide direct support to the classroom teachers, Title I teachers, and special education teachers to ensure the implementation of a high quality reading and math program.
- Meet weekly with the principal to determine focus for the week.
- Assist the principal and teachers with the collection and disaggregation of the reading and math data and assist teachers in identifying and targeting areas of need for classrooms and individual students.
- Develop an agenda and area of focus for grade level meetings and conduct the meetings with the principal. The reading and math coaches also maintain minutes from each meeting.
- Provide teachers with necessary resource for conducting high quality lessons in reading and math.
- Model effective/high-yield instructional strategies or co-teach with the classroom teacher.
- Assist with implementation of RTI (Response to Intervention) in grades K-3 and the expansion to grades 4 & 5.
- Assist providing professional development to teachers with specific needs.
- Assist providing parent workshops in reading and math.

## **Measures of Effectiveness**

Student growth in reading is measured monthly by iStation and teacher assessments. Math is measured through ARDT, Accelerated Math, Envision math assessments and teacher assessments. SOLAR benchmark assessments are given each nine weeks for determining student knowledge of materials taught during the previous nine weeks. Student gains in each of these assessments reflect the assistance provided by the reading and math instructional coaches.

## **Early Results**

The reading and math coaches were not hired until year two of the turnaround effort, after a year of assessing the need for the support. The results will be more evident in year three of the SIG grant funding.

## **Lessons Learned**

- Seek highly qualified teachers to work in this instructional coaching role.
- This was a costly project and funds must be found to sustain at the end of year three.
- Grayson County Public Schools is a very rural district and finding highly qualified specialists was very difficult, therefore a substantial amount of funding was utilized to train the instructional coaches. In effect, larger school divisions may be able to secure more highly qualified specialist without spending so much on training.

## **Budget**

The reading and math coaches were funded solely by SIG funding, with an estimated salary and benefits cost of \$80,000, and an additional \$80,000 for training.

## **Plan for Scale Up, Phase Out, or Continuation**

The school division is currently seeking other sources of funding for maintaining the reading and math coaches at the Fries School.

## **Other Hints**

When the reading and math instructional coaches perform teacher observations, it is very important that they and the teachers are aware that they are observing solely to collect data to determine teacher needs, resource needs, and professional development needs. Everyone needs to understand that they are not observing for teacher evaluation.

The planning process for this practice was in collaboration with University Instructors, who provided the training for instructional coaching. *Instructional Coaching* by Jim Knight was a great resource for the implementation of this practice, as well as, the *Vital*

*Observation and Feedback Tools Form* received from William & Mary (Gregory & Rozzelle) was very useful for helping teachers.

**Contact Information**

Name: Elizabeth Brown

Title: Principal

Email: [ebrown@grayson.k12.va.us](mailto:ebrown@grayson.k12.va.us)

Phone: (276) 744-7201

DRAFT

## Russell Middle School: Redesigning the Master Schedule

**District:** Brunswick County Public Schools

**District Type:** Rural

**School Level:** Middle (Grades 6–8)

### Description of Practice

This project involves revising the master schedule to make the best use of available instructional time to extend core time, allow built-in time for remediation and enrichment (45 minutes daily), and providing a shared common planning time for grade level teachers.

Some of the changes to the master schedule include:

- Each grade level has a unique schedule
- Bells were eliminated
- Time between classes was cut to 1-2 minutes
- Team classes are located near each other
- The entire student body changes classes at the same time only one time (for enrichment/remediation time) during the day; thus eliminating class tardiness and hallway misbehaviors.

### Implementation Steps

- Evaluate the current schedule to see where time is spent on non-instructional activities (class changes etc...).
- Arrange for core teams to have classrooms situated in very close proximity.
- Arrange a master schedule that cuts transition times (1-2 minutes) thus allowing for longer core classes, common grade level planning, and an enrichment/remediation time daily.
  - This change requires eliminating class change bells and creating a different schedule for each grade level.
  - Reduce elective classes to one 60-minute period daily.
  - Include a 45-minute remediation and enrichment time daily into the master schedule
    - This remediation time is the only class that shares a common time during the day. (1:45-2:30pm)
- Monitor the use of the enrichment/remediation time
- Require teacher planning of enrichment/remediation time
- Require PLC and team meetings during planning time (minutes submitted to administration)
- Administration meets with teachers bi-monthly to examine tier movement of students in math and reading

## **Staffing Plan**

- Administration and guidance created the master schedule.
- The administration monitors the use of Enrichment/remediation time.
- Teachers plan and use enrichment/remediation time effectively.
- Teachers and administrators use common planning time for PLC meetings, parent meetings, and/or professional development.

## **Measures of Effectiveness**

- The effectiveness of the project is examined in team and PLC agendas and minutes. Administration is often directly involved with PLC meetings.
- The use of the enrichment and remediation (E/R) time is monitored for effectiveness by review of lesson plans and direct observation of how teachers are using the time.
- Administration meets with teachers bi-monthly to examine tier movement of math and reading students.

## **Early Results**

Early results have shown teachers becoming increasingly proficient in the effective use of E/R time. The increased use of computer aided instructional programs such as SuccessMaker and iStation is also evidence of effective use of the E/R time. Lesson plans on E/R time have shown increased effectiveness in the use of this time.

Agendas and minutes from PLC and team meetings show that teachers are effectively using the common planning time to:

- Plan for cross curricular instruction,
- Discuss student data and progress, and
- Take part in professional development.

Since the entire student body is not changing classes several times daily, class tardiness is non-existent and hallway behavior has greatly improved.

## **Lessons Learned**

- When the 45-minute E/R time is written into the master schedule it is imperative that administration vigilantly monitors how the teachers are using this period so that it does not become a simple extension of core time.
- At first, it is recommended to schedule teachers when to take classes to the computer lab or to assign a subject focus each day. As teachers become accustomed to the effective use of this time and see how it benefits students, they can take more responsibility by scheduling lab time and small group instruction on their own.
- It is further recommended that the grouping and regrouping of students takes place at a smaller level (teams) at first and can later be expanded to a grade level,

or even the entire staff, as teachers become proficient in identifying student skill weaknesses and coordinating activities

- Establishing expectations for the use of teacher planning time is equally critical, as is reading and commenting on the agendas and minutes as they are submitted.

### **Budget**

There are no direct costs to revising the master schedule.

### **Plan for Scale Up, Phase Out, or Continuation**

Effective scheduling will continue after SIG funding ends.

### **Other Hints**

- Eliminating bells, while disconcerting to some teachers and administrators, allows much more flexibility in scheduling and provides less classroom and hallway management issues. Only one time during the day is the entire student body in the hallway (during the E/R block) and during that time movement is mainly concentrated amongst the four core teachers.
- Using available elective teachers during E/R time is helpful, as these teachers can take students to the labs, work with large groups while core teachers target smaller groups or individuals, and assist with orderly movement in the hallway.
- Locating the grade level teams in such a manner that students travel only next door or across the hall is a critical factor. The less travel in the hallways, the more time becomes available for teaching and learning.

### **Attachments:**

- [Master Schedule](#)

### **Contact Information**

Name: Jerome Williams

Title: Principal

Email: [Jerome.williams@brun.k12.va.us](mailto:Jerome.williams@brun.k12.va.us)

Phone: (434) 848-2132

## TC Williams High School: Titan Time

**District:** Alexandria City Public Schools

**District Type:** Urban

**School Level:** High (Grades 9–12)

### Description of Practice

Titan Time is a 38-minute period that occurs twice a week to provide additional instructional time to students in an identified area of need.

Titan Up Students – Students with a D, F, or I in any class are directed to a teacher of the content area they are struggling with for extra help. The following priority order is used when determining where a directed student will go for extra help:

1. Math and English
2. Science and history
3. Electives

Titan Choice – Students who do NOT have a grade of D, F, or I will be considered Titan Choice students. Titan Choice students will be assigned a “sticker” so that they can be easily recognized as a Titan Choice student. They have the freedom to determine where to go during Titan time. The options include:

- Meeting with one of their teachers
- Silent study hall (classroom based on content)
- Media Center
- Career Center
- Guidance office
- Scholarship fund
- Activity in gym
- Attend Assemblies (optional assemblies with topics of interest to the study body)
- Special activities TBD

Program components include:

- Period 1 is used as the “base period” for planning Titan Time so that rooms and teacher scheduling can have a starting point.
- Directed students will receive a letter notifying them of their destination for the next 5 weeks.
- All teachers have an assignment during Titan Time. Teachers who do not have a classroom Period 1, but will need a room for “Titan Up” students, must be assigned a classroom.
- Elective teachers who will not be remediating or who have small numbers of “Titan Up” students may be grouped together to share a classroom. Department chairs work with their staff to partner teachers and free up rooms when needed.
- Teachers who have multiple preparations will be assigned one subject to remediate during Titan Time. For example, a math teacher that teaches algebra and geometry will only teach one of those subjects during Titan Time. Thus some

“Titan Up” students may not be sent to their own math teacher, but to a teacher assigned to teach the subject they need assistance in.

- Study Hall rooms for Math, Science, English and Social Science will be established so students can get help in a subject if they are “Titan Choice” students.
- The grouping of “Titan Up” students will be based on CRT data when available.
- Research-based curriculum will be used when available so that directed students receive various methods of instruction during Titan Time.
- Peer tutors will be used to enhance instruction. Honor Society students and those in need of Community Service Hours will be encouraged to assist teachers as student tutors in classrooms and in the Math/Writing Center.

Attendance is taken by the teacher in the classroom on a paper roster and is placed on the door to be collected by a dean or security by the end of Titan Time. A Dean will follow up with absent students in less than 24 hours. Titan Choice passes are available so that “Titan Choice” students can move during Titan Time.

### **Implementation Steps**

- A team comprised of teachers, students, and administrators visited surrounding schools to observe similar programs.
- A committee then developed a plan based on the observations and the specific needs of our school.
- It was determined that the entire program would be rolled out over 2 years.
  - Year 1 focused on increased time for student learning, focused on areas of need.
  - Year 2 (current year) will focus on writing and monitoring student goals.

### **Staffing Plan**

- Special education teachers work in classrooms with content teachers.
- Department Chairs work with the staff to determine subjects assigned to teachers.
- Peer tutors are used to enhance instruction. Honor Society students, and those in need of Community Service Hours, are encouraged to assist teachers as student tutors in classrooms and in the Math/Writing Center.

### **Measures of Effectiveness**

We have monitored the number of students with a grade of D or F at each interim and quarter. A survey of students and teachers will be conducted during the third week of September 2012 to further assess effectiveness.

### **Early Results**

Titan Time has been well received by both students and staff. Students believe that it is a positive step that they are allowed freedom based on achievement. Teachers like the fact

that a focus is being placed on reaching “all” students. One particular example is that students taking the Algebra 2 SOL, who participated in the SOL prep-version of Titan Time, passed the test twice as often as students not participating. Results on the end of course exams have been analyzed based on the number of cycles the student participated in Titan Time. Students participating have higher pass rates than students not participating in the program. The number of D’s and F’s has also decreased.

### **Budget**

This program did not require any additional funding.

### **Plan for Scale Up, Phase Out, or Continuation**

The phase up includes a focus on student goals and progress monitoring. Both students and teachers will examine data (SMI, SRI, grade, transfer tasks, SOL, career surveys) to write a Math, English, and postsecondary S.M.A.R.T goal. This day will also focus on the monitoring of goals and student progress.

### **Other Hints**

We believe that the success of the program was due of the careful planning and structured/tiered role out.

### **Attachments:**

- [Titan Time Information & PowerPoint](#)
- [Titan Time Schedule Change Request](#)
- [Titan Time Letter Template](#)
- [Titan Time Summary](#)

### **Contact Information**

Name: David Serensits  
Title: Assistant Principal for School Improvement  
Email: david.serensits@acps.k12.va.us  
Phone: (703) 575-3414

## Tidewater Park Elementary School: All Hands Type Writing Club

**District:** Norfolk Public Schools

**District Type:** Urban

**School Level:** Elementary (Grades K–5)

### Description of Practice

Opportunities are provided for students in Grade 5 to build their capacity in the areas of writing, keyboarding, and instructional technology. Acquiring these lifelong skills aid students in understanding and utilizing various writing tools that can be applied when taking the SOL Writing Assessment. Students receive extended learning opportunities in writing (before school, after school, and during extended summer sessions). Incentives are provided for all student participants.

### Implementation Steps

- Two teachers researched and retrieved a typing program from the Internet.
- Two teachers facilitated the classroom as students typed and/or wrote.
- Student reports and writing samples were printed and maintained as a means of monitoring student progress.
- Lessons were reviewed daily.

### Staffing Plan

The School Improvement Coach monitors the implementation of this program. Teachers receive ongoing best practice training, support, and resources to ensure high-quality and rigorous instructional delivery.

### Measures of Effectiveness

This pilot program was implemented over the summer with a group of 5<sup>th</sup> grade students, with a 95% daily attendance rate throughout the 3-week program. The following outcomes were achieved:

- Baseline Writing Samples were used to determine
  - Composing/written expression, and
  - Usage/mechanics
- Data was collected daily to determine students' progression of each level and the amount of time it took to complete each typed leveled lesson.
- The computerized website generated a printout of the leveled lessons and a "completed lesson" checklist.

### Early Results

Early results indicated that students lacked basic computer typing skills such as

identifying the home row keys. However, as students advanced through the levels and the computerized activities, they were able to progress from the beginning of level 1 to the end of level 16. Also, it was noted that boys became more willing to write.

### **Budget**

This 3-week program was piloted this summer. There were 2 part-time teachers hired for 16 participating students. SIG, local, and other Title I funding sources were used to support this program. The total cost of the implementation of the pilot was \$2,000.

### **Plan for Scale Up, Phase Out, or Continuation**

Once SIG support ends, our plan is to continue this practice with funding support from local and Title I funds.

### **Other Hints**

- We recommend implementing the program in Grades 4 and 5 to provide more learning experiences for all students.
- If implementing during the summer, start within weeks of the school year ending, versus mid-July or early August to increase the extended learning opportunity.
- The teacher must maintain a steady pace for students who progress faster than others to prevent disengagement.
- Preparation/Planning is the key to success! Advances in technology have made word processing tools and Internet resources widely available. Students made extensive use of familiar writing tools such as Fakebook and comprehensive typing programs. Fakebook was a way to get the students interested because they are already familiar with the application and its features.

### **Attachments**

- [Sample worksheets](#)
- Educational Freeware Website:  
*<http://www.educational-freeware.com/news/top-5-free-typing-tutors.aspx>*

### **Contact Information**

Name: Sharon Phillips  
Title: Principal  
Email: [sphillips@nps.k12.va.us](mailto:sphillips@nps.k12.va.us)  
Phone: (757) 628-2500

Latonya Lawrence / Rhonda Epps  
Interventionist / 4th grade teacher  
[llawrence@nps.k12.va.us](mailto:llawrence@nps.k12.va.us) /  
[repps@nps.k12.va.us](mailto:repps@nps.k12.va.us)  
(757) 628-2500

## Vernon Johns Jr. High School: R.E.A.C.H.I.N.G Across the Curriculum

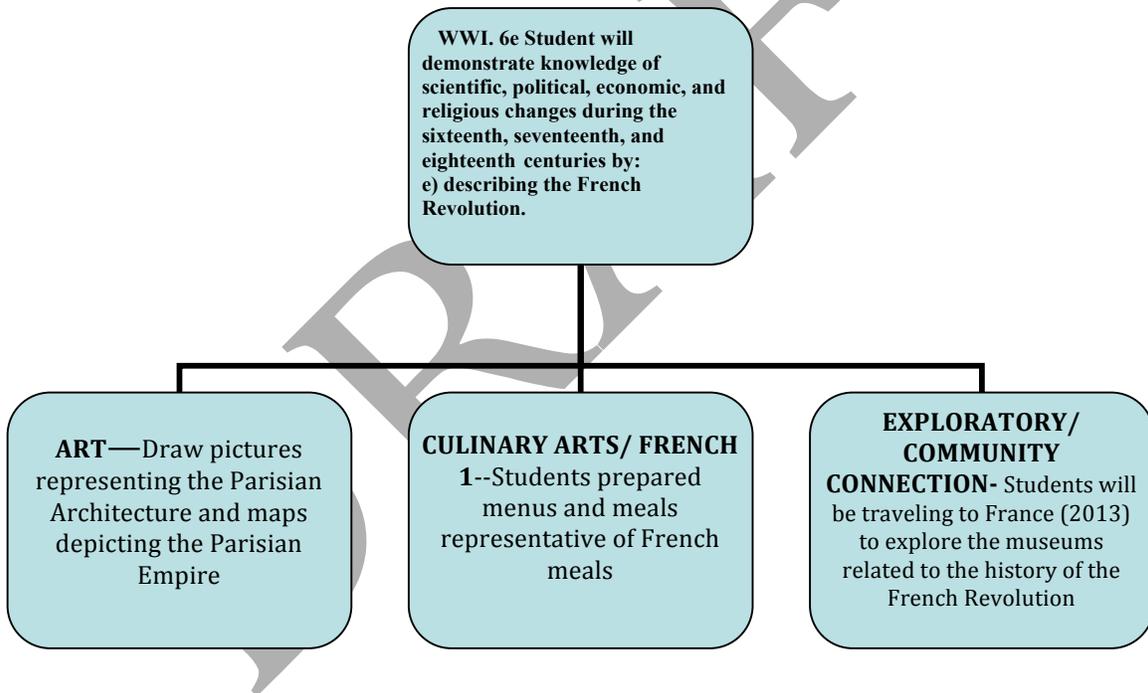
**District:** Petersburg City Public Schools

**District Type:** Urban

**School Level:** Junior High (Grades 8–9)

### Description of Practice

Our mission at Vernon Johns Junior High School is that students are our first priority and we ensure that teachers and students articulate the language of instruction. We ensure that we are held accountable for student achievement, and that we produce actions that reflect student learning. To that endeavor, we launched a program entitled “R.E.A.C.H.I.N.G Across the Curriculum” to place a laser-like focus on our social sciences in the areas of World History 1, Civics, and Economics. The program functions as a global effort within our entire school to include Standards of Learning objectives that focus on World History 1, Civics, and Economics enmeshed within all classes, including our physical education and exploratory (art/ music/ technology/ culinary arts) courses. An emblematic structure of our practice is as follows:



### Implementation Steps

- Faculty met to discuss the needs of the Social Science department based on the given data.
- The cross-curricular vision and plan was developed.
- The lesson plans were developed and implemented.
- To ensure that the program is monitored effectively, an administrator meets with the Professional Learning Communities to reflect on the cross-curricula

instructional methods that have been incorporated, as well as to ensure that representatives of PE/Exploratory are involved with the lesson planning process.

### **Staffing Plan**

The staffing plan includes the following members, listed with their roles:

- Principal - Facilitator
- Assistant Principals - Assistant Facilitators
- Art Teacher - Maps/ Globes/ Architectural Drawings
- French Teacher - French Language Instruction
- Synergistics Teacher - Digital Pictures
- Physical Education Teacher - French related games (soccer)
- All Core Teachers (Math/ English/ Science/ History) - Collaborate with exploratory teachers
- Parent Teacher Student Association - Fundraising

### **Measures of Effectiveness**

- Benchmark data is collected every 4.5 weeks
- Classroom assessments and student work are collected and analyzed weekly
- Data analysis meetings are also held within the Professional Learning Communities

### **Early Results**

Our Civics Standards of Learning scores went from 49% to 72%.

### **Budget**

The budget includes the following amounts and sources of funding:

- SIG- \$2000.00
- Title I- \$100.00
- Donations (PTSA)- \$100

### **Plan for Scale Up, Phase Out, or Continuation**

This program will be continued and funding through community donations and district prioritization.

### **Other Hints**

- Collaboration with other departments is an effective practice to meet a common goal or benchmark.
- Begin early to maximize your efforts.
- Ensure that you include your stakeholders & community.

- Seek buy-in from all teachers.
- Think holistically to ensure that the program will provide meaningful connections.

**Contact Information**

Name: Dr. Ronnie Watson

Title: Principal

Email: rowatson@petersburg.k12.va.us

Phone: (804) 479-6803

DRAFT

## Professional Learning Communities

### Boushall Middle School: Leadership Matters – How Distributive-Collaborative Leadership Impacts Student Achievement

**District:** Richmond City Public Schools

**District Type:** Urban

**School Level:** Middle (Grades 6–8)

#### Description of Practice

Leadership is distributed throughout the school community. The team engages in solution-finding strategies and data reviews as the key factors for problem solving. Contributions of all members of the community are valued and expected. This model supports a culture of learning together, rather than relying on individual expertise.

#### Implementation Steps

The first step was for the principal, in consultation with the internal and external lead partners, to select team members. This was an eye-opening experience and one that was somewhat difficult, due to the challenge of finding the right people who could also be leaders. We knew people who could serve as facilitators, mentors, coaches, vision-builders, advocates, contributors, change agents, and who were credible in the eyes of other staff members were necessary.

Once we established our list of new instructional leaders, the principal invited the members of the team to her home for dinner and an honest discussion of the mission and goals. This was done in an effort to set the stage and tone to have open, honest communication and to move forward with the understanding that we needed to be united in our thinking and willing to do what was necessary to move the school forward.

EdisonLearning provided training on establishing norms, roles, and responsibilities for an effective leadership team. Team members received further training on the use of solution-finding strategies and data analysis to inform school-wide decisions by attending various workshops and conferences, and from independent and group study. Intentional communication systems were put in place so that all members of the school community are aware of and can articulate what needs to be done. This process drives and defines steps in building the leadership capacity of teams.

#### Staffing Plan

The administrative team designated teachers and other stakeholders in the building to serve as members of the leadership team. Our internal partner, district level representatives, and EdisonLearning partners were also added as they provided numerous

tangible and human resources. On-going professional development, for the leadership team, is provided by Edison Learning and other district partners. This work is done to build leadership capacity and ensure a sense of urgency and responsibility among all stakeholders. On a weekly basis, team members analyze the accomplishments of the entire school community and share best practices to promote success.

### **Measures of Effectiveness**

Effective distributive leadership is assessed by the schools' ability to establish comprehensive, sustainable systems and processes that design, organize, prioritize, manage, and drive change using research and best practices that result in a school-wide interminable improvement cycle. Our internal and external partners are valued members of the team and regularly discuss and measure the schools' integration and planning to overcome barriers to achieve the school's mission, vision and goals. Team members share a sense of purpose and common goals, and each team member is willing to work to achieve these goals. The team continually engages in the process of efficient solution-planning to create next steps in the cycle of improvement. Teachers, parents, community members and other stakeholders note the changes they have seen in the school and local and state agencies have complimented the work as well.

### **Early Results**

The concentration on distributive and collaborative leadership has resulted in a feeling of empowerment by team members. Further, members are given opportunities to be more involved with the decision making process and, as a result, take more ownership in the success of the school. The regularity of meetings, with follow-up minutes, allows for clear communication channels within the school community as well as with the central office staff. This thrust on discussing and resolving issues supports the work around the school improvement process. The focus of leadership team meetings has moved from an informational agenda to one of problem-solving, identifying data-based solutions, assigning responsibility, and determining next steps. The resulting model has not only increased the administration's visibility in classrooms, but has also provided them with the time to be "true" instructional leaders. This is evidenced by the comparison of Boushall's scores on the 2011-2012 Standards of Learning Assessments with other schools within the district.

- 100% pass rate in Algebra 1
- 100% pass rate in Geometry
- Highest score in 06 Math
- 2<sup>nd</sup> highest score in US 1
- 2<sup>nd</sup> highest score in US 11
- 2<sup>nd</sup> highest score in Civics
- 2<sup>nd</sup> highest scores in 06 English
- 2<sup>nd</sup> highest score in 07 English

### **Lessons Learned**

- Administrators and the leadership team must become even better trained at managing change and developing the overall capacity of staff. Leaders must continuously demonstrate a commitment to the school vision and how it aligns to their everyday practices. Finding the right people to serve on the leadership team

is imperative and may require the restructuring of traditional roles (i.e. department chairs and grade level leaders) within the school.

- Transitioning teachers into instructional leaders is a sensitive and sometimes awkward process. It requires a certain “leadership mentality” and persons who are willing to take a stand on making the necessary changes. It can also be time consuming to provide the necessary support those teachers need in developing a base of knowledge in understanding their new role.
- Finding time to do what needs to be done is often difficult. Everything is time-consuming, from the training that is necessary, to developing strategic plans, to making certain changes.
- Helping the team members remember the goals and focus on student achievement is critical. The focus must always be what is best for the students or the school community, instead of individual interests.
- Partners are absolutely essential for systemic change, but it is important to select partners that add value and provide diverse and needed resources.

### **Budget**

The leadership team was allotted a budget for professional development. Stipends were also given to staff members for working additional hours and to support their new roles and responsibilities. These costs were covered by using a combination of SIG and Title 1 funds.

### **Plan for Scale Up, Phase Out, or Continuation**

The administration and leadership team will ensure the involvement of all stakeholders in the cycle of continuous improvement. Particular focus will be done on the analysis and use of data related to program implementation and instructional improvements, processes and decision-making. The team will evaluate the effectiveness of identified strategies and oversee appropriate adjustments. The leadership team will begin succession planning so that sustainability can be maintained.

### **Attachments:**

- [Maximizing Distributive Leadership PowerPoint](#)
- [Features of an Outstanding School Leadership](#)
- [Leadership Rubric](#)
- [Leadership Agenda for August 2012](#)
- [Sample Leadership Minutes and Agenda Formats](#)

### **Contact Information**

Name: Victoria Oakley  
Title: Chief Academic Officer  
Email: voakley@richmond.k12.va.us  
Phone: 804-780-7727

## Colonial Beach Middle/High School: Teacher Mentoring Program

**District:** Colonial Beach Public Schools

**District Type:** Rural

**School Level:** Middle/High (Grades 6–12)

### Description of Practice

Teacher turnover in rural school divisions is a major problem and can be a hindrance to student achievement. Colonial Beach Public Schools began a new teacher mentoring program two years ago and continues to refine the program to provide support to the new teachers, to reduce turnover, and to develop leadership skills in the veteran teachers.

Each teacher new to the division is assigned a veteran teacher to be a mentor. These new and veteran teachers meet once a month throughout the year to hear presentations from experts on various topics, to share experiences and solutions to problems, and provide moral support to one another.

The new teachers are required to observe three other teachers and present to the monthly meetings a summative evaluation of each visit. New teachers also have a video made twice a year of their own classroom instruction, which they review with the building administrator and the division superintendent.

There are book groups that read assigned books on education and report back to the mentoring group. Some of the selected books are more research-based and some more humorous, but all are about teaching and learning.

Second year teachers continue to meet together as a group throughout the year. They determine the topics they want to learn more about and also do the classroom observations, videotaping experiences and book sharing. They are not assigned mentors but can call upon their previous mentor for assistance or seek support from the monthly meetings with their fellow teachers.

### Implementation Steps

1. Design mentoring plan
2. Develop budget
3. Assign supervision responsibilities
4. Monitor activities and adjust as necessary
5. Evaluate success at year's end

### Staffing Plan

The superintendent and principal began the program, and shared the responsibility for its management for the first two years. The principal and a Lead Turnaround Partner are managing the program during the third year.

## **Measures of Effectiveness**

The reduction in teacher turnover would be evidence of the success of the program. Other measures of effectiveness would include teacher feedback, evaluation of the program from the participants, increased student achievement as measured by the rate of progress from teacher SMART goals to their summative evaluation.

## **Early Results**

The turnover rate at the high school has not decreased. There are many factors that influence teacher retention that cannot be addressed through a mentoring program. We believe the program is providing support to our new teachers and hope to see increased teacher retention in the future.

## **Lessons Learned**

- Provide a variety of professional development by different educational specialists as well as tenured faculty.
- Align the schedule to include collaborative planning time for departments.

## **Budget**

Sources of funding include: SIG, Hard to Staff Teacher Grant, New Mentor Teacher Program (State), and the Community/Teacher/Student Mentor Program.

## **Plan for Scale Up, Phase Out, or Continuation**

The principal will continue the Mentor Program each year. The principal will groom a master teacher to become the Mentor Program Coordinator for future years. This will assist in building leadership capacity among faculty members. The principal will also provide time for teachers to share best practices and to build common knowledge and vocabulary throughout the faculty.

## **Attachments:**

- [Meeting and Topic Schedule for 2011-2012](#)
- [Meeting and Topic Schedule for 2012-2013](#)

## **Contact Information**

Name: Clint Runyan  
Title: Principal  
Email: [crunyan@cbschools.net](mailto:crunyan@cbschools.net)  
Phone: (804) 224-7166

Name: Donna Power  
Title: Superintendent  
Email: [dpower@cbschools.net](mailto:dpower@cbschools.net)  
Phone: (804) 224-8080

## J.E.B Stuart Elementary School: Academic Success Team

**District:** Petersburg City Schools

**District Type:** Urban

**School Level:** Elementary (Grades K–5)

### Description of Practice

Data indicated that J. E. B Stuart Elementary had difficulty with students meeting reading benchmarks, specifically comprehension of written text and word analysis skills. The leadership team met to review the data and developed a plan that would encompass delivery of instruction, professional development and data analysis. The academic success team met bi-weekly to discuss student data, intervention, lesson plans, delivery of instruction, student engagement, and resources. Each of the meetings yielded information needed to adjust professional development and intervention plans.

### Implementation Steps

The principal and leadership team decided to incorporate weekly school-wide formative assessment strategies, day-time tutors, aligned resources for teacher and student use, Accelerated Reading, and the Parent Honor Roll to improve students' comprehension of written text and word analysis skills.

Prior to the implementation of the initiative, all teachers participated in trainings on formative assessments by EdisonLearning. A school-wide formative assessment strategy was highlighted each week to ensure that teachers used various methods when checking for understanding during daily instruction. The weekly focus strategy was announced during morning announcements. Teachers were provided a Formative Assessment Reference guide containing information for the effective use of each weekly strategy.

The principal monitored this initiative during walk-through observations. If the strategy was being used, it was noted in the feedback section of the observation tool. If the strategy was not implemented during the observation period, the teacher was required to provide a day for a follow-up observation by the principal.

Day-Time Tutors (retired educators) were hired to provide small group instruction to students identified through iStation, PALS, bi-weekly assessments, EdisonLearning eEvaluate, and 9-week benchmark data. Many of the students served were Tier III students. The nine tutors worked with students in grades K – 5 three days per week for four hours each day. Tutors were allotted 30-minutes for planning each of the three days on-site. The Title I Team monitored the effectiveness of the Day-Time Tutor initiative. Student assessment data was collected regularly to measure students' academic growth and tier movement. The Title I Team provided the tutors with all needed materials and supplies to ensure student success.

The Title I Team met bi-weekly to review resources for teachers and align them with the pacing guide. Teachers were given information regarding where to find specific activities or strategies for use with the Standards of Learning each week. Materials included

Comprehensive Strategies Intervention (CSI), iStation intervention lessons, Coach Books, Ladders to Success, PALS intervention lessons, etc.

Accelerated Reader (AR) was also incorporated into the reading curriculum. AR encourages substantial differentiated reading practice to create strong readers. The media center has a flexible schedule that allows students to checkout books throughout the day and during their class resource time. Students are required to read their library books two times before taking an Accelerated Reader Quiz. The media specialist monitors the program by running weekly quiz reports for each grade level. Students scoring 100% were recognized in a “100% Club” and received points obtained in a specified time frame. Based on their level of recognition, students were allowed to select a prize from the principal’s prize closet. In addition to the monitoring done by the media specialist, teachers monitor students’ vocabulary growth, literacy skills development, and reading skills using the data provided by the media specialist. The STAR Reading Assessment, administered at the beginning and end of the school year was used to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

### **Staffing Plan**

- Administrators:
  - Ensured that time was allowed for needed staff development
  - Scheduled time for students to attend tutoring sessions
  - Monitored and evaluated the success of each initiative by conducting observations and reviewing data provided by the media specialist and Title I team
  - Allotted funds for the purchase of prize items for the Principal’s Prize Closet
  - Recognized student achievement during Quarterly Awards Day Programs
- Title I staff were responsible for supporting teachers as the strategies were implemented. In addition, they also:
  - Provided assistance to the administrator with staff development
  - Monitored and evaluated success of each practice
  - Provided teachers needed resources for reading
  - Provided training, assistance, and materials and supplies to Day-Time tutors
- Day-Time Tutors were responsible for tutoring identified students in the areas of reading and math.
- Parents were encouraged to read with and listen to their students read daily. Reading logs were signed and returned to school weekly. Parents also participated in various school events that promoted literacy.

### **Measures of Effectiveness**

- Teacher and students were observed implementing the practices mentioned. Observations were conducted daily by administrators and the Title I Team.

- Effective Lesson Planning was completed by grade level teams with the assistance of the Title I Team, and feedback was provided by all observers.
- Student performance data was analyzed regularly to measure the effectiveness of the initiatives.
- Additional measures include:
  - Walk-through observation forms
  - Principal’s observation forms
  - Agendas and sign-in sheets
  - Weekly and bi-weekly tests
  - Quarterly benchmarks
  - Monthly Edison Learning eValuate
  - Monthly iStation Assessment
  - Quarterly PALS Assessment

### Early Results

- Full Accreditation status for 2011–2012 and 2012–2013 school years.
- At the beginning of the 2011–2012 school year, 84% of classroom teachers had been trained in the use of Formative Assessment during the previous school year.
- In the fall of 2010, 23 out of 83 (28%) Kindergartners were identified for remediation according to the PALS test data. In the fall of 2011, PALS data indicated that only 9 out of 88 (10%) Kindergartners needed remediation, indicating an increase in the percentage of students ready for school.
- Data analysis yielded a revision of the Kindergarten teachers’ delivery of instruction because more students were academically prepared. Therefore, they were able to differentiate and provide more challenging activities for students performing above grade level.
- Lesson plans indicate a significant difference in the rigor of instructional activities between the 2010–2011 school year and the 2011-2012 school year.
- Day-Time Tutoring efforts yielded positive results in the following areas:

iStation results for 2011-2012 indicate an increase of Tier 1 students in grades K-2. iStation Response to Intervention (RTI) efforts will continue for the 2012-2013 school year as results from the 2011-2012 school year indicate the program can be successful when implemented with fidelity.

**Table 1. iStation Growth**

	September	May	September	May	September	May
Tier 1	17%	29%	1%	27%	25%	30%
Tier 2	30%	15%	14%	13%	10%	31%
Tier 3	52%	56%	85%	61%	65%	39%
	Kindergarten		1 <sup>st</sup> Grade		2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	

**Table 2. SOL Reading Results Comparison**

SOL	2011	2012
Grade 4 Reading	78	83
Grade 5 Reading	78	91

Also, the 2011–2012 Diagnostic Report for Accelerated Reader indicates that students took a total of 6,593 tests. The report from the 2010–2011 school year indicates students took a total of 2,459 tests. Students increased the number of tests taken by 4,134.

### **Lessons Learned**

- Establishing goals based upon the needs of each subgroup of students is essential to the success of all students. Goals must be differentiated.
- The administrative team must provide strategies for best practices on a continuous basis.
- Strategies must be based on the most recent set of data in order to be effective.

### **Budget**

The sources of funding include: SIG, PALS, and Title I and were used to cover:

- iStation Subscription - \$6,500
- Day-Time tutors - \$50,000
- AR Incentives - \$3,800
- Honor Roll Incentives - \$5,000

### **Plan for Scale Up, Phase Out, or Continuation**

We plan to continue the implementation of all programs that yield successful results. We are currently working with the Office of Federal Programs to determine an action plan for continued funding for Day-Time tutors and student incentives after the completion of year 3 of SIG funding. Prior to SIG funding, Title I covered the cost of Day-Time tutors and student incentives. SIG funding will end in the Spring of 2014.

### **Contact Information**

Name: Kori Reddick  
Title: Principal  
Email: koredrick@petersburg.k12.va.us  
Phone: (804) 862-7012

Name: Malvia Keys  
Title: Instructional Specialist  
Email: makeys@petersburg.k12.va.us  
Phone: (804) 862-7012

## **J.M. Langston Focus School: Pearson Learning Teams – A collaborative approach to improving instructional practices**

**District:** Danville Country Public Schools

**District Type:** Urban

**School Level:** Other (Grades 6–12)

### **Description of Practice**

Supported by several published research studies, the Learning Teams (LT) model is an evidence-based framework for improving instruction through teacher collaboration and instructional leadership. Through creation of job-alike collaborative teacher workgroups and instructional leadership teams supported by the on-going site-level guidance of Pearson LT Advisors, LTs facilitate the systematic and continuous study of instruction by helping teachers develop specific instructional solutions based on evidence from the classroom. Strategies include: how to measure readiness conditions, how to configure teams, how to identify and support facilitators and leadership of those teams, and what protocols should be used to guide productive meetings focused on improving achievement. The focus of this year is training for sustainability of the model.

### **Implementation Steps**

- A 2-day First Year Summer Institute to train Teacher Facilitators of Learning Team (LT) Workgroups which were divided into 3 teams: HS math and science; HS English and social studies; and Middle School.
- LT Workgroups met every other week throughout 2011-2012 led by their teacher facilitator and supported by the embedded Pearson Achievement Advisor.
- The teacher facilitators, assistant principal, and Pearson Achievement Advisor formed an Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), and met monthly with a Pearson Learning Teams' specialist for ongoing professional development concerning the implementation of the Seven Step Protocol.
- Most recently (July 30-31, 2012) the ILT and several new teacher participants completed a 2-day Second Year Summer Institute in preparation for Year 2's implementation of Pearson Learning Teams during the 2012-2013 school year.
- Teacher LT workgroups will again meet every other week; in addition there will be an ILT monthly meeting for support.
- All workgroup meetings follow the LT Seven Step Protocol:
  1. Identify and clarify a student need to work on together
  2. Formulate a clear objective for each common student need
  3. Identify a promising instructional approach to address each need
  4. Plan and prepare to deliver lesson(s) in the classroom
  5. Deliver instruction: make consistent and genuine efforts
  6. Analyze student work to evaluate whether instruction met the student need
  7. Reassess: repeat cycle or move on to another area of need
- The Learning Teams' specialist will also conduct monthly phone conferences with the administration to assist in monitoring the progress of the project and address any concerns or challenges.

## **Staffing Plan**

- The Assistant Principal participates in all training and workgroup meetings.
- Teacher leaders facilitate the LT workgroup meetings
- All core content area teachers participate on a LT workgroup.
- The Pearson Achievement Advisor provides embedded support to all.
- The Pearson LT specialist provides monthly training.

## **Measures of Effectiveness**

The LT model incorporates a system of standard evaluation instruments:

- Implementation checklists
- Workgroup and ILT ratings
- Faculty surveys
- Analysis of progress with student achievement data

The teacher workgroups also use data to identify a common student need and then use the Seven Step Protocol to plan for addressing that need. The teachers implement the agreed upon lessons and strategies and collect the agreed upon student work and performance results for analysis in a future meeting. The team determines if the students have met the agreed upon criteria for success. If the lesson is producing the desired results, the team moves on to another identified student need. If not, the lesson is revised, re-taught, and reevaluated.

## **Early Results**

At this time the early results are anecdotal. In several teacher forums in the Spring of 2012, the teachers identified their LT work as the professionally rewarding and promising for making lasting changes at the school. The teachers noted the collegiality and distributive leadership inherent in the program to be the greatest strengths.

## **Lessons Learned**

- Persistence in implementation and fidelity to the Seven Step Protocol is most important.
- The training of the teacher facilitators and the support provided throughout the year are critical to success.
- A minimum of 2 years, and preferably 3 years, are needed for full implementation and to ensure sustainability over time.
- The program requires commitment of faculty and administration to protect implementation such as; common planning time, released time for professional development, summer training and support with resources.

## **Budget**

The Learning Teams program was a part of the total contract for providing school turnaround support through the Pearson STEP program. The standard price for LT services typical for most projects is between \$55,000 and \$70,000 per school for one year of implementation services. Specific pricing for the program would be determined based on a readiness assessment and the individual school's discussions with Pearson Learning Teams providers.

## **Plan for Scale Up, Phase Out, or Continuation**

Considering that the administration is supportive and makes certain that the LT teacher workgroups are provided the time and resources necessary for their work; the program will continue indefinitely. Periodic support from Pearson may be beneficial to assist in training new administrators or teacher leaders; especially when taking into consideration the normal turnover of school personnel. The goal of all training is total sustainability at the end of year 2. After this year, it is the responsibility of the administration and teacher leaders in the school to maintain the viability of the model. Pearson also provides a virtual support model for schools that would like sustained support services at a reduced cost.

## **Attachments:**

- [Pearson Learning Teams Overview Document](#)
- [Connect the Dots Article](#)

## **Contact Information**

Name: Pam Tamusaitis  
Title: Pearson Learning Teams  
Director  
Email: [pam.tamusaitis@pearson.com](mailto:pam.tamusaitis@pearson.com)  
Phone: (818) 239-6493

Name: Kevin Whitlock  
Title: Principal  
Email: [kwhitloc@mail.dps.k12.va.us](mailto:kwhitloc@mail.dps.k12.va.us)  
Phone: (434) 799-5249

Name: Michael Kelly  
Title: Pearson Achievement Advisor  
Email: [Michael.kelly@pearson.com](mailto:Michael.kelly@pearson.com)  
Phone: (434) 221-2636

## Prince Edward County High School: Community of Learners

**District:** Prince Edward County Public Schools

**District Type:** Rural

**School Level:** High (Grades 9–12)

### Description of Practice

The Community of Learners involves each core department (math, English, science, & history) being paired with a group of elective teachers. In these groups, teachers look for connections in regards to curriculum and ways to support each other.

The community of learners has several goals:

- To connect core curriculum to elective curriculum in order to build a sense of relevance for learners.
- To include all stakeholders (not just core teachers) in the process of school improvement.
- To build collaboration among teachers in improving instruction and analyzing data.
- To create an environment in which teachers look at data and take action steps that will use data to improve student achievement.

### Implementation Steps

1. Staff engaged in professional development activities regarding teamwork.
2. The administrative team created four learning communities for English, math, science and history. Each group had a group of elective or CTE teachers.
3. A memorandum describing the Community of Learners was created.
  - This memorandum was communicated to the School Improvement Team
  - This memorandum was communicated to the entire staff
4. At a faculty meeting, teachers were divided into the various communities.
  - Teachers were asked to connect core curriculum to elective curriculum and report.
5. On a professional development day, teachers divided into their Community of Learners to look at simulation test data.
  - Teachers identified students who needed assistance passing SOL tests.
  - Each group created assistance plans for students who were in need.

### Staffing Plan

- The Student Support Specialist provided benchmark data.
- Administration developed guiding questions to guide the data analysis.
- Department Chairs led each of the four communities.

## **Measures of Effectiveness**

School climate and teacher satisfaction data, in combination with student performance scores are used to monitor the practice.

## **Early Results**

Several teachers commented that they felt more involved with the transformation process. In several cases, elective teachers such as art and PE teachers were providing remediation packets for history and science SOL tests.

At the beginning of the school year, school climate surveys indicated that a significant portion of teachers disagreed with the notion that they were empowered in the school. When teachers were asked, “The school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about empowerment,” The percentage of teachers who agreed with this statement increased from 18% to 47% at the end of the year. Additionally the science SOL pass rate increased from 84% to 92%. History scores increased from 69% to 78%.

## **Lessons Learned**

Collaboration is the key to school improvement. Moreover, all stakeholders, not just core teachers should be involved in the transformation process.

## **Plan for Scale Up, Phase Out, or Continuation**

The focus of the Community of Learners was for elective and CTE teachers to support core teachers. As credentialing tests become more critical to the on-time graduation rate, the focus of the Community of Learners should have a reciprocal focus in which elective and core teachers support each other in helping students pass critical SOL and credentialing assessments.

## **Other Hints**

- Teachers need to be informed of this initiative before it begins.
- Key stakeholders such as department chairs or School Improvement Team members should be given a chance to provide input.

## **Attachments**

- [Memorandum](#)
- [SOL Success Sheet](#)
- [Instructional Focus](#)

## **Contact Information**

Name: Craig Reed  
Title: Principal  
Email: [Craig.Reed@pecps.k12.va.us](mailto:Craig.Reed@pecps.k12.va.us)  
Phone: (434) 315-2130

Name: Harold Lawson  
Title: Cambridge Education  
Email: [HLawson45@comcast.net](mailto:HLawson45@comcast.net)  
Phone: (434) 315-2130

## Sussex Middle School: Building Capacity Through Teacher-Led PD

**District:** Sussex County Public Schools

**District Type:** Rural

**School Level:** Middle (Grades 6–8)

### Description of Practice

Cambridge Education, Sussex Middle School's Lead Turnaround Partner (LTP) worked with the school administration to identify teacher leaders and coach them to deliver professional development (PD) effectively to their peers. The teachers then led PD workshops for the county's teachers during August PD sessions. Cambridge Education outlined some suggestions and the teacher presenters expanded those lessons, created PowerPoint presentations, and modified the workshops to match various grade levels.

The four teacher-led sessions were:

- Writing across the curriculum
- Team building
- Creating a class website
- Active learning

To supplement the teacher-led sessions, the reading coaches from the elementary and middle schools also led a session on the use of reading centers.

### Implementation Steps

- The LTP and principal identified teachers with the potential to be teacher leaders.
- The teachers were coached and trained in their new role by the LTP.
- The LTP provided the teachers tasks and suggestions for the PD workshops.
- The teachers created and modified their workshops and presentations.
- The LTP and principal monitored the presentations.

### Staffing Plan

The LTP, assistant superintendent and principal supported the teacher leaders.

### Measures of Effectiveness

The success of the strategy was measured by how well the teacher leaders delivered PD and by the feedback they received from their peers and observers.

### Early Results

Feedback from the trainings was extremely positive, with many teachers commenting that the sessions were the best PD they had ever received. Sussex Middle School now has a core group of teacher leaders trained and who have led PD sessions. Several more

teachers are interested in joining the group of teacher leaders as well. Several teachers have been observed using the strategies outlined during the PD workshops.

### **Lessons Learned**

- Most schools have a core group of teachers, who are capable of supporting colleagues.
- Not all PD needs to be externally provided, though external support may be beneficial.

### **Budget**

The cost of training the teacher leaders was included as part of Cambridge Education's contract with the district. Teacher leaders were not provided additional funds, but did receive recertification credits and flowers.

### **Plan for Scale Up, Phase Out, or Continuation**

The strategy will be implemented again, and will be done with a new group of teacher leaders each year.

### **Attachments:**

- [Sussex Middle School PD](#)

### **Contact Information**

Phone: Adriene Stephenson  
Title: Principal  
Email: [astephenson@sussex.k12.va.us](mailto:astephenson@sussex.k12.va.us)  
Phone: (434) 246-2251