

**Virginia Board of Education
School and Division Accountability Committee
May 30, 2007**

**James Monroe Building
Jefferson Meeting Room, 22nd Floor
Richmond, Virginia
3:45-5:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 3:45 p.m. by David L. Johnson, chair. The following Board of Education members were present: Dr. Emblidge, Dr. Brewster, Mrs. Castro, Dr. Jones, Mr. Moore, Mr. Rotherham, Mrs. Saslaw, and Dr. Ward. Dr. Billy K. Cannaday, Jr., superintendent of public instruction, was also present to assist the committee in its work.

Presentation by Representatives of Sussex County Public Schools

Mrs. Kathleen Smith, director of school improvement for the Virginia Department of Education, introduced Dr. Charles Harris, the superintendent of the Sussex County Public Schools, who made a detailed progress report to the committee. The highlights of Dr. Harris' presentation follow.

For the Sussex County schools, each department is continuing to implement activities and strategies to strengthen performance of the school division in both instruction and operations. Instructionally, the third nine-week assessments are showing gains throughout the elementary and middle schools. The staff continues to be cautious in projecting outcomes while there appears to be more enthusiasm among teachers about the performance of students. Results from assessment tests continue to indicate gains in student performance.

The Reading First Initiative Team (RFIT) meetings at both Chambliss Elementary and Jackson Elementary schools continues to project a significant increase of 14 or more percentage points above the 2005-2006 SOL pass rates. Focused after-school remediation continues at both schools to increase student's performance. In addition, the schools continue to supplement the reading program with additional reading material beyond the regular Direct Instruction program. The projected pass rates from the RFIT meetings are listed below for third grade at Chambliss along with the fourth and fifth grades at Jackson Elementary.

Reading

	<u>2007 Projected Results</u>	<u>2006 Results</u>
Third Grade	74%	55%
Fourth Grade	73%	55%
Fifth Grade	75%	47%

	Math	
	Saxon	
	<u>2007 Projected Results</u>	<u>2006 Results</u>
Third Grade	90%	61%
Fourth Grade	71%	29%
Fifth Grade	80%	31%

In addition, the preliminary writing results are indicating an improvement in performance from 50 percent to 68 percent for Jackson Elementary School.

The projected pass rates of Sussex Central Middle School are showing areas of gains and concerns. The assessment results for the third nine weeks are showing continued improvement beyond the gains projected at the semester. Projected pass rates at the 7th grade and 8th grade are above 80 percent of students passing SOLs for both English and mathematics based on third nine-week assessment. The preliminary writing results are indicating that 78 percent of students were successful. The additional focus on writing did strengthen the results as only 64 percent of students passed writing in 2006. Sixth grade performance continues to require primary attention as the English assessments are not projecting students to meet the performance goals. English assessments are projecting that 50 percent of students are passing and math assessments are indicating a pass rate of 60 percent. The math projection will still be a 24 point gain in one year, but it is not enough according to Dr. Harris' assessment.

Dr. Harris reported that the middle school needs to continue with a more focused effort on the 6th grade performance. An increased performance of students based on the assessment results for all instructional areas at the 6th grade is needed. Efforts must be made to review the effectiveness of instruction and to provide support for teachers along with remediation for identified weak student performance areas. The principal and instructional coaches for reading and mathematics must continue their focus at the 6th grade level while maintaining support for reading and mathematics at the 7th and 8th grades.

Sussex Central High School's results are consistent with prior year's third quarter assessment results. The faculty and administration has continued to focus on building the performance of students in each subject area. There has been an increased focus in the area of science with a coach assisting teachers on curriculum and instruction.

Overall, there appears to be growth in performance at Chambliss Elementary and Jackson Elementary schools while growth has occurred at the middle school as well. An improved performance effort must continue for the 6th grade. Efforts will continue to strengthen student performance throughout the school division.

Dr. Harris closed his remarks by stating that the school division does plan to reapply for the continuation of the reconstitution plans for both Chambliss Elementary and Jackson Elementary if SOL goals are not accomplished. In addition, the middle school will apply for reconstitution if their pass rates do not meet the SOL required standards. It is the mission of the Sussex County School Division to reach full accreditation status of all its schools.

Presentation by Representatives of Petersburg City Public Schools

Ms. Smith introduced Mr. Ed Betts, the acting superintendent of the Petersburg City Public Schools, who gave a detailed report on the progress of the Petersburg schools. Mr. Betts introduced Dr. Victory, the newly named superintendent for the Petersburg schools, who will be coming on board full time shortly. An outline of Mr. Betts' presentation follows.

Efficiency Review Progress Report

- Elementary consolidation to be implemented 2007-2008
- Decrease of 60 FTE positions
- Implemented 62% of new salary scale with savings, no increase in local funds

Program Coherence-Accomplishments

- Completed consolidated NCLB Application
- Provided biweekly reports on federal/state initiatives
- Monitoring School Improvement Plans (ongoing)
- Implemented Alternative Governance at Vernon Johns Middle School
- Aligned curriculum with pacing charts (ongoing)
- Conducted targeted review at 3 schools
- Reorganized department of instruction (vacancies filled pending approval by new superintendent)

Teacher Quality-Accomplishments

- Implemented Hard-to-Staff grant (82 teachers received the incentive)
- Partnered with Virginia State University to assist with new teacher mentoring (ongoing)
- Administered professional development survey to instructional staff
- Offered courses to provisionally licensed teachers
- Created a division wide professional development plan
- Developed teacher evaluation protocol
- Current instructional vacancies – 32 positions
- Contract with Visiting International Faculty to hire teachers in critical shortage area
- Partnered with the College of William and Mary, Hopewell City Schools, and Norfolk City Schools to implement a Literacy Program at both Middle Schools
- Partnered with the College of William and Mary to develop an implementation plan for instructional technology initiative

Enhance Leadership Quality –Accomplishments

- Reorganized central office staff
- Administered employee survey to guide development of strategic plan
- Organized leadership retreat for Summer 2007
- Participated in regional grant application with Dinwiddie Public Schools and Virginia State University
- Principals completed a year long Leadership Development course with Virginia Commonwealth University

Strengthen Communication Skills-Accomplishments

- Implemented protocol for internal and external communication
- Redesigned web page for Human Resources (ongoing)
- Developed advisory committees (pending approval by new Superintendent)
- Prepared report on existing partnerships with community organizations/agencies
- Developed parent satisfaction survey to be completed by June 10, 2007

Ongoing Initiatives-Challenges

- Program Coherence
- Ensure smooth transition to new Superintendent and leadership team
- Continue to refine School Improvement Planning process
- Monitor implementation of aligned curriculum
- Effective Use of Data
- Continue to improve the use of data to inform decisions

- Teacher Quality
- Recruit and retain highly qualified and effective instructional staff
- Increase qualifications of instructional staff (full licensure and added endorsements)
- Leadership Quality
- Support improved performance of building administrators
- Develop leadership capacity within instructional staff
- Communication Skills
- Support new superintendent in engaging the community by working with the Chamber of Commerce and planning a welcoming reception
- Safe and Secure Environment
- Continue to monitor and improve policies and procedures
- Provide ongoing professional development to administrators and other staff

Mr. Johnson welcomed Dr. Victory on behalf of all members of the Board of Education. Mr. Johnson added that his committee is looking forward to working closely with Dr. Victory and his staff in the coming months to ensure that the MOU is fulfilled.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the committee was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.