



Office of School Improvement Newsletter

**Dr. Kathleen M. Smith, Director
Office of School Improvement
Phone: (804) 786-5819**

**Volume 2, Issue 2
Spring 2012**

Message from the Editors

**Mr. Michael L. Hill, PASS Coordinator
Dr. Yvonne A. Holloman, Associate Director**

Welcome to our Spring 2012 issue of the OSI Newsletter! We hope that you found the information contained in the Winter Issue beneficial. This will be the final issue for this school year.

Summer planning is underway in the OSI for training opportunities for many of our divisions and schools. Please look for more information to come.

To be sure, this is a very important time during the school year. As we approach the fourth reporting period, divisions and schools are encouraged to remain focused and deliberate in the execution of their respective improvement plan. Many of our schools (with contractor and division support) have also developed a *45 day Pre-SOL Instructional Plan* to enhance their improvement plan. 45 day plans should be prescriptive - written and implemented with very specific student needs in mind. Here are several strategies that will help make a difference as you implement your plan: use formative assessments as the cornerstone for remediation/feedback to students; use corrective instruction as a follow-up to assessments; ensure collaboration occurs between teacher and intervention provider; practice ongoing program evaluation to determine whether the program was effective; ensure in-class intervention that takes place during regular instructional time and is provided by the classroom teacher and/or resource personnel. We must have a sense of urgency to make every minute count and take an "all hands on deck" approach in order to ensure that all of our students are given the best opportunity to find success. Let's all work together to finish the school year as strongly as we started it.

In closing, the OSI would like to thank the VDOE intra-agency differentiated technical assistance team, OSI contractors, division and school personnel, the College of William and Mary, the Center on Innovation and Improvement (CII), the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center (ARCC), the National High School Center, Casenex LLC (DataCation), the Virginia Foundation for Educational Leadership (VFEL), and the Virginia Association for Elementary School Principals (VAESP) for your support and hard work this year! Together, we are making a difference in the lives of the children we all serve!

Important Dates

March 30—April 30 — Data Analysis Quarterly Form on Indistar dashboard to be completed

April 10—Student Assistance Programming Webinar

April 17, 18, 19, and 26 – High School Teams Meet with Regional Liaisons

April 20—iStation Webinar for LTP Cohorts

April 24 – Student Assistance Programming (Part 2) Webinar

April 25— Cohort 2: LTP Meeting at Hilton Garden Richmond Airport

April 26— Cohort 1: LTP Meeting at Hilton Garden Richmond Airport

May 1 – High School Improvement Plans Due

May 4—Differentiated Technical Assistance Team Contractors Meeting (Webinar)

June 1—Submit School- and Division-level Improvement Plans via the Indistar™ Dashboard

June 15—SIG Continuation Applications are due

June 25-26—School-University Research Network (SURN) Conference at The College of William and Mary (Division liaisons and contact persons only)

June 29 —Data Analysis Quarterly Form on Indistar™ Dashboard to be completed

June—July— OSI SIG Monitoring

August – High Schools Upload Pre-HS Risk Data into VEWS via EWTI/SSWS

September – Summer Conference for Select High Schools, Richmond Omni

September 30—1003(a) funds must be expended

School Improvement Planning Update

As we prepare for the close of another school year, school- and division-level teams will complete work on their respective improvement plans by entering final monitoring comments for the year. Afterwards, each team will submit their improvement plans via the Indistar™ Dashboard by June 1, 2012. This is a new feature which will capture all work that has been completed by the improvement team during the 2011-2012 school year. Another feature that has been added to the Indistar™ Dashboard is the *document upload* which enables divisions and schools to create folders and store files that may be downloaded and viewed by team members, coaches, and Office of School Improvement personnel. In the past, the OSI has received several requests to have this capability added to the Web-based planning tool. Users will be permitted to upload a total of 20 files. Once the user has reached the limit, files will need to be deleted before any additional documents may be uploaded. More information regarding this feature may be found at <http://www.indistar.org>.

Office of School Improvement (OSI) Updates

Division Leadership Support Team Initiative—

The OSI and The College of William and Mary have completed the second year of the division leadership support team (DLST) project involving 59 school divisions across the Commonwealth of Virginia. This project included a laser-like focus on the alignment of school and division improvement plans, using data to make instructional and programmatic decisions, and implementation of research-based instructional strategies. Dr. Valerie Gregory served as a featured presenter throughout the year, and shared pertinent information regarding John Hattie's book, *Visible Learning*. Participation in the School-University Research Network (SURN) Leadership Academy featuring presentations by Mike Schmoker and Dean Fixsen will serve as the culminating activity for the group.

High Schools –

In June, we will conduct a project with several high schools to pilot a High School Transitional Change Map rubric and accompanying high school needs sensing intervention protocol that we have developed in collaboration with the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center and the Southern Regional Education Board. The results of this pilot will assist us in modifying the rubric and interview protocol for full implementation with our high schools next year. In September, select high schools will participate in a two day training that we are hosting at the Richmond Omni. Topics will include updates on the new English and mathematics standards and SOL assessments, providing feedback and evaluation to improve Instructional planning and delivery, Using Data to Guide School Improvement, DataCation, Indistar™, and an update on the status of Virginia's NCLB waiver application. Stay tuned for more information on these professional development opportunities.

DataCation –

A number of schools have taken advantage of the recent enhancements offered by DataCation. Data fields have been added that allow schools to include student grades in science and social studies, student benchmark results in science and social studies, and five additional fields that schools can populate with information on student attendance, behavior, and/or course performance that the school desires to add. Complete information on the new functionality and corresponding flat file template, as well as

video tutorials, can be accessed at <https://va.datacation.com/Login.aspx>.

Student Assistance Programming—

A construct of Student Assistance Programming and one of the *Eight Elements of High School Improvement* from the National High School Center, focuses on engaging and connecting with community stakeholders to support student and family needs. I.C. Norcom High School in Portsmouth embraced this construct and began a collaborative effort with many community stakeholders. The I.C. Norcom High School Improvement Team invited ten community stakeholders to a meeting to solicit support and build collaborative relationships. The team presented information on academic performance and their graduation rate. As noted in their meeting minutes, "the response was better than expected and twenty-three representatives of the various city, state and non-profit and faith based agencies attended." The team shared with the participants their current accreditation rating and the strategies being implemented to increase academic performance and the graduation rate. A PowerPoint presentation highlighted the data that reflected their challenges – absences, course failure, Standards of Learning failure, pregnancy, suspension, family crisis, homelessness and other barriers. Each of the community representatives expressed a desire to work with the teams at I.C. Norcom to resolve the challenges. They developed actions steps and set the next meeting agenda, which will feature students' perspectives and suggestions for resolving the challenges. Congratulations to the I.C. Norcom High School Improvement Team for a great beginning!

Schools Receiving 1003(a) funds, including Schools New to Improvement—

1003(a) funds must be expended by September 30, 2012 with final reimbursement by November 1, 2012. Technical assistance requests continue to be honored through the DTAT team. Indistar™ and DataCation assistance continues to be supported by OSI team members.

SIG Cohort I and II—

January – March 2012 SIG Cohort I and II Training: Cohort I – focus on teacher observations and providing feedback; Cohort II - completed work with the Transformational Toolkit Indicators. OSI SIG Monitoring is

scheduled for June 2012 – July 2012. Actual dates and updated guidance will be available prior to the April 2012 training. SIG Continuation Applications scheduled for April 2012 release are due by June 15, 2012.

Differentiated Technical Assistance—

OSI is nearing the end of the webinar series offered in 2011-2012 through its newly-developed Differentiated Technical Assistance (DTA) model. School and school division staff participated in one or more webinar series based on needs identified through either a self-assessment process or through work with their division liaison. OSI offered webinar series on the following topics: Co-Teaching and Inclusive Practices; Differentiated Instruction; Elementary School Scheduling; Formative Assessment for New Schools; Formative Assessment for Returning Schools; Instructional Delivery; Instructional Preparation; Leadership; Student Engagement; Training for School Improvement teams. Over 150 school and school division staff members took part in the webinars, which were led by instructors Dr. Jane Baskerville, Steve DeGaetani, Judy Johnston, Vonnie Kunkel, Dorothea Shannon, Greg Wheeler, Thomasynne Beverly, Lisa Dieker, Dr. Yvonne Holloman, Michael Hill, and others. We appreciate the time and expertise these instructors shared in designing and delivering the webinars. OSI is now gathering feedback from participants on the impact of the webinar series. Comments from participants received to date include: *Each webinar provided at least one "gem" that will eventually appear in our school that will impact the way we do things for our students. It may be an instructional technique, a means of celebration, or a better way of looking at data; As an administrator I do not have the time (or energy!) to read all of the latest research, these webinars keep me up to date on pertinent topics and practices I can use immediately to assist the school in improving student achievement. The webinars are very helpful. Since we have a middle school in improvement it would be very helpful to cite situations and provide examples that pertain to secondary.*



Kudos of the Quarter from the OSI Contractors

Bedford County Public Schools, Danville City Public Schools, and Pittsylvania County Public Schools: Kudos to Danville City, Pittsylvania County, and Bedford County Division Support Teams for extending their talents and expertise to other schools in their divisions to ensure continuous academic improvement in all their schools. The three divisions have extended Academic Reviews to all their schools and regularly meet with school administrators to review implementation of the reviews' recommendations.

Caroline County Public Schools: The division leadership team, under the guidance of Mrs. Dolly Lindsay, has established a strong, collaborative relationship with the two young and energetic principals of Bowling Green Primary and Elementary Schools that is focused on using student, teacher and school performance data to improve student achievement. The division and school teams have put in place a system for examining data to identify needs and develop interventions and the requisite professional development to respond to the needs of students who require additional assistance.

Charles City County Public Schools: The division leadership team, under the direction of Dr. Pat Alexander, is working hard to coordinate the Indistar™ improvement indicator tasks with the efforts of school coach, Dr. Mary Mehaffey and the school Data Analysis Consultant, Mrs. Brenda Spencer. The division team is working closely with the school principal and leadership team to effectively employ the DataCation program and facilitate the analysis of student performance data at the school level. The school superintendent, Dr. Janet Crawley, attends and takes an active role in every division leadership team meeting.

Charlottesville City Public Schools: The division and school staff have done an excellent job of working together coordinating their efforts to support students attending Clark Elementary School. This coordinated effort is made possible by the alignment of the division Indistar™ improvement plan with the school's improvement plan.

Danville City Public Schools and Tazewell County Public Schools: Kudos to Tazewell County and Danville City school Superintendents for their close working relationship with and support for their Division Support Teams and their personal interaction with the administrators and School Improvement Teams in their divisions.

Fauquier County Public Schools: Kudos to the Grace Miller Elementary School team in Fauquier County, for its excellent work in designing a data chart that identifies at risk students by name and by need on each grade level. The chart records students' performance on benchmark assessments to include PALs, SOL basals, and identifies the intervention each child receives. Students' access to ESOL and Special Education services are noted.

Grayson County Public Schools: Members of the Grayson County Division Improvement Team, Stephen Comett, Susie Funk, Anna Farmer and Doug Lawson, work in partnership with principals Elizabeth Brown and Susan Mitchell, Fries and Independence Elementary School respectively, and their School Improvement Teams to ensure that division policies and resources are focused on student performance and improved achievement.

Norfolk City Public Schools: Norfolk High Schools – With the more intensive focus on the graduation rate, Norfolk has supported the implementation of grad coaches in some of their high schools as well as initiating in-house GED programs for struggling overage learners. Reba Jacobs Miller at Lake Taylor High School in Norfolk had her leadership team read “Graduating More Students,” an article by Ben Levin and bring back ideas that they can use for graduating more of their students.

Suffolk Public Schools — During the 2012 Indistar™ Summit in Biloxi, Mississippi, Dr. Yvonne Holloman, associate director of the OSI, shared the comprehensive system of support implemented by the Suffolk division leadership team to support their schools. Participants were quite impressed with the alignment of school and division goals as well as the manner in which the division uses data from a variety of sources to effect change throughout the organization. Also, Suzanne Moore at Kings Fork High School is sending out brochures to local businesses and churches suggesting partnerships with them in an effort to improve the graduation rate. Her team also instituted the “Adopt a Bulldog” program. Staff members can adopt one to three students who do not have attendance issues but who are struggling academically. They mentor these students in an effort to support and nurture them through to graduation.

Wythe County Public Schools: The Wythe DLST and especially the School Team is commended for focusing on individual student improvement, the improved use of their tools and for supporting external efforts for students with disabilities. The tone of DLST meetings and the reported attitudes of school level personnel are sounding more like a school focused on a vision, rather than a quick fix attitude.



Principal's Corner

School improvement is a PROCESS not a checklist of activities. Align these principal actions to help drive the school improvement process in your school.

April

- Complete quarterly report form on Indistar™ dashboard. Apply data findings to school improvement plan and make adjustments where necessary.
- Review report cards and provide written feedback to teachers. (Meet with individual teachers regarding students who may require a referral to the student assistance team (SAT); Conduct student assistance team meetings based on teacher referrals)
- Meet with teachers regarding their revised retention lists.
- Conduct monthly meeting with the school leadership and improvement team. Review progress of SIP on Indistar™; make needed revisions; post progress monitoring notes, agendas, and minutes; review current school data; formalize discussions for gathering feedback for instructional program changes for next year.
- Using specific individual student performance data, develop and implement the 45 day SOL Instructional Plan for all testing grades
- Plan SOL Parent Night.
- Conduct monthly administrative meeting with grade-level/content area teams to discuss individual student progress for all students; review 45 day plan implementation and monitoring procedures; all support staff attend including guidance;
- Plan quarterly school celebration for students, staff, and parents.
- Observe classroom instruction and conduct follow-up conferences with teachers; schedule final peer observations; provide ongoing feedback to teachers on performance plans.
- Schedule instructional walkthroughs with the school leadership team.
- Develop and distribute the summative evaluation forms to staff members; begin writing summative evaluations.
- Conduct safety drills and submit the required forms to the division.
- Conduct a monthly building walkthrough with the lead custodian to identify any work orders that need to be submitted.
- Distribute May newsletter and calendar of activities for both May and June to all staff members, students, and parents.

May

- Meet with staff members regarding the upcoming SOL testing. Conduct meeting with all teachers and proctors regarding testing procedures; meet with all staff (including custodians, food service, maintenance, etc.) to review building procedures during testing; distribute parent letters and testing schedule; develop incentive plan for students; plan SOL Pep Rally; schedule individual student conferences to provide support and build confidence.
- Coordinate with division all summer school programs available to students.
- Conduct SOL Parent Night.
- Conduct monthly meeting with the school leadership and improvement team. Review progress of SIP on Indistar™; post progress monitoring notes, agendas and minutes; review quarterly report data and submitted form on Indistar™ dashboard; make updates for final submission of Indistar™ School Improvement Plan due June 1st .
- Conduct monthly administrative meeting with grade-level teams to discuss individual progress for all students (support staff attend including

guidance); review status of 45 day plan; final discussion on SOL testing readiness; discuss any recommendations for grade level improvements for next year (changes to master schedule, effectiveness of remediation/tutorial programming, etc.).

- Conduct summative evaluation conferences with the staff members.
- Conduct safety drills and submit the required forms to the division.
- Conduct a monthly building walkthrough with the lead custodian to identify any work orders that need to be submitted.
- Distribute newsletter and calendar of activities updates for June to all staff members, students, and parents.
- Conduct quarterly school celebration (students, staff, parents).
- Meet with all staff members regarding the end-of-the-year responsibilities and procedures for closing out the school year.

June

- Review report cards and provide written feedback to teachers.
- Meet with teachers regarding final retention lists; discuss procedures for parent notification of the impending retention and the appeals process.
- Meet with school leadership team; submit Indistar™ School Improvement Plan by June 1st; identify and schedule summer professional development for individual teachers and for teacher teams.
- Conduct final school-wide end of the year celebration with students, staff, and parents.
- Conduct safety drills and submit the required forms to the division.
- Conduct a monthly building walkthrough with the lead custodian to identify any work orders that need to be submitted to be completed immediately or over the summer.
- Check-out staff members on the last day of school after all tasks from the end-of-the-year checklist have been completed.
- Collect keys from all staff members.

Summer Principal Action Priorities

Daily/Weekly Tasks

- Keep enrollment / PTR information updated.
- Keep class rosters updated.
- Check on progress of maintenance and summer cleaning.
- Keep running list of items to review/share during teacher work week.
- Walk the building each day.
- Meet families and others as they visit.
- Check with summer staff about tasks for the day.
- Return phone calls and emails promptly.
- Model a positive attitude.

Use the below principal actions to assist in the review, evaluation, and refinement of your school improvement process. Preparation, planning, and implementation are key!

- Implement effective organizational strategies – both school-wide and office procedures, i.e. tickler file, wall calendar, etc.
- Review important manuals: School Board Policy/Procedures Manual, Personnel Manual, and Professional Growth Plan Guidelines
- Do your HOMEWORK – Study the webinar PowerPoint's and documents posted on the School Improvement and Reform section of the VDOE website; BRIM Training manual and notebook, and Todd Whitaker's two books "What Great Principals Do Differently" and "What Great Teacher Do Differently."



Principal's Corner (cont'd)

- __ Schedule meeting(s) with the instructional leadership team to review new assessment data documenting trends and patterns; subgroup data needs; discuss feedback from previous year (what worked and what didn't); review/revise the Indistar™ School Improvement Plan; review master schedule needs; discuss needs for professional development schedule; share ideas for August teacher work week schedule including staff meeting agenda items; develop plan of action to integrate all decisions into school improvement process.
- __ Review new research on effective instructional practices and seek opportunities to observe effective instruction. For instance visit the Doing What Works website at <http://dww.ed.gov/> and Indicators in Action on <http://www.indistar.org/action/>.
- __ Research and plan to implement best practices for providing effective feedback to teachers on instructional practices.
- __ Develop process for monitoring all aspects of instructional program.
- __ Develop comprehensive lesson plan template with implementation expectations.
- __ Identify walk through form to be used and develop schedule for use.
- __ Following division policy, identify teacher observation instrument and develop observation schedule for implementation during school year and communicate process to all staff involved.
- __ Review exceptional education and English language learners caseload assignments, IEP's, instructional delivery model needs, and child study/eligibility procedures.
- __ Determine instructional student remediation needs/schedule with a focus on in-class corrective instruction using new/different research based instructional strategies.
- __ Develop master schedule using current data and student needs; plan for new student target groups.
- __ Identify, design, and provide implementation guidelines and expectations for school data analysis system for use by all instructional staff. Must have ability to collect data on individual students and target groups.
- __ Order instructional and other materials (student agendas, teacher agendas, home school communication folders, etc.).
- __ Finalize class rosters; add new students as necessary.
- __ Finalize room assignments and update school map.
- __ Update staff information for staff handbook and crisis plan.
- __ *Develop teacher work week schedule maximizing time for work in classrooms and team planning (including inclusion teams). Include activities that encourage fun and teamwork. Create agenda for work week staff meeting and prepare materials and handouts. Organize all work week schedules, etc. and handbooks in notebook for teachers.
- __ *Schedule Open House before school starts – Open House can be an opportunity for students and parents to informally visit the school, classrooms and meet their teacher(s) and other staff, distribute any school forms, parent (committee/helper) sign up, student supply list, sample student agenda, pay fees, tour the school, etc. Open House can also be a more formal event to introduce students and parents to Middle School or High School, as an example. The key is planning and organization.
- __ Determine how and when teacher assignments are communicated to student/parents.
- __ Prepare "Welcome Back" letter to staff – include schedule for work week, school news, and generate excitement for the opening of school – mail letter to all staff by end of July.
- __ Meet with PTA President, Program Chair, and music teacher (if appropriate) to determine dates of PTA meetings and programs.
- __ *Identify and schedule Fall and Spring picture days.
- __ *Schedule PTA/School Back-to-School Night in September (1st PTA mtg.) PTA business mtg., teachers formally present to parents (in classrooms) instructional expectations for teachers, students and parents, student behavioral expectations, etc.
- __ Create Duty Schedules – Bus and parent pickup, hall duty, lunch duty (if applicable), 1st day of school and 1st week of school "All Hands on Deck" duty list, etc.
- __ *Place all reporting due dates from Indistar™ Dashboard on School Calendar
- __ *Develop yearly schedule for SOL/Benchmark Assessment Analysis/Formative Assessment meetings with teachers beginning in August/September for SOL results.
- __ *Develop schedules for interim report, report card, benchmark assessment and professional development.
- __ *Schedule Meeting with bus drivers during teacher work week to discuss expectations.
- __ Create and organize morning arrival and afternoon dismissal bus schedule (including 1st week of school) to maximize instructional time and student safety.
- __ *Develop content and schedule for first day of school principal meetings with students to set expectations for year.
- __ *Schedule faculty and team meetings (days of week and/or month) – faculty, leadership team, grade level/content team, vertical team, inclusion team, child study/eligibility team, IEP team, school improvement planning team, celebrate learning team, student assistance program team, etc. (combining teams wherever possible).
- __ *Develop mentor schedule for 1st year teachers and buddy schedule for other faculty and staff entering their 1st year at the school regardless of years of experience.
- __ *Identify "Celebrate Learning" Team; develop and schedule "Celebrate Learning" Assemblies for the school year. Also, schedule school spirit days.
- __ Determine and provide written duties and responsibilities for all school support staff—secretarial, custodial/maintenance, instructional, and administrative.
- __ Review all schedules, rosters, updated lists, room assignments, etc. for suggestions and proofing.
- __ Update Student/Parent Handbook and Faculty Handbook.
- __ Update school website and develop expectations and procedures for school website use by teachers.
- __ Identify strategies to increase parent communication.
- __ Develop new parent liaison/resource program.
- __ *Place on school calendar all special schools days (i.e. Veterans Day, staff appreciation days, etc.
- __ *Review up coming school year division calendar, school board meetings, principal meetings, etc. before scheduling school activities and place on school calendar.
- *Denotes to be posted on school calendar

[Office of School Improvement](#)

Dr. Kathleen Smith
Director
Kathleen.smith@doe.virginia.gov

Dr. Yvonne Holloman
Associate Director
Yvonne.holloman@doe.virginia.gov

Ms. Jo Ann Burkholder
Student Assistance Systems Coordinator
Joann.burkholder@doe.virginia.gov

Mr. Michael Hill
PASS Coordinator
Michael.hill@doe.virginia.gov

Ms. Selena McBride
Grants and Reports
Selena.mcbride@doe.virginia.gov

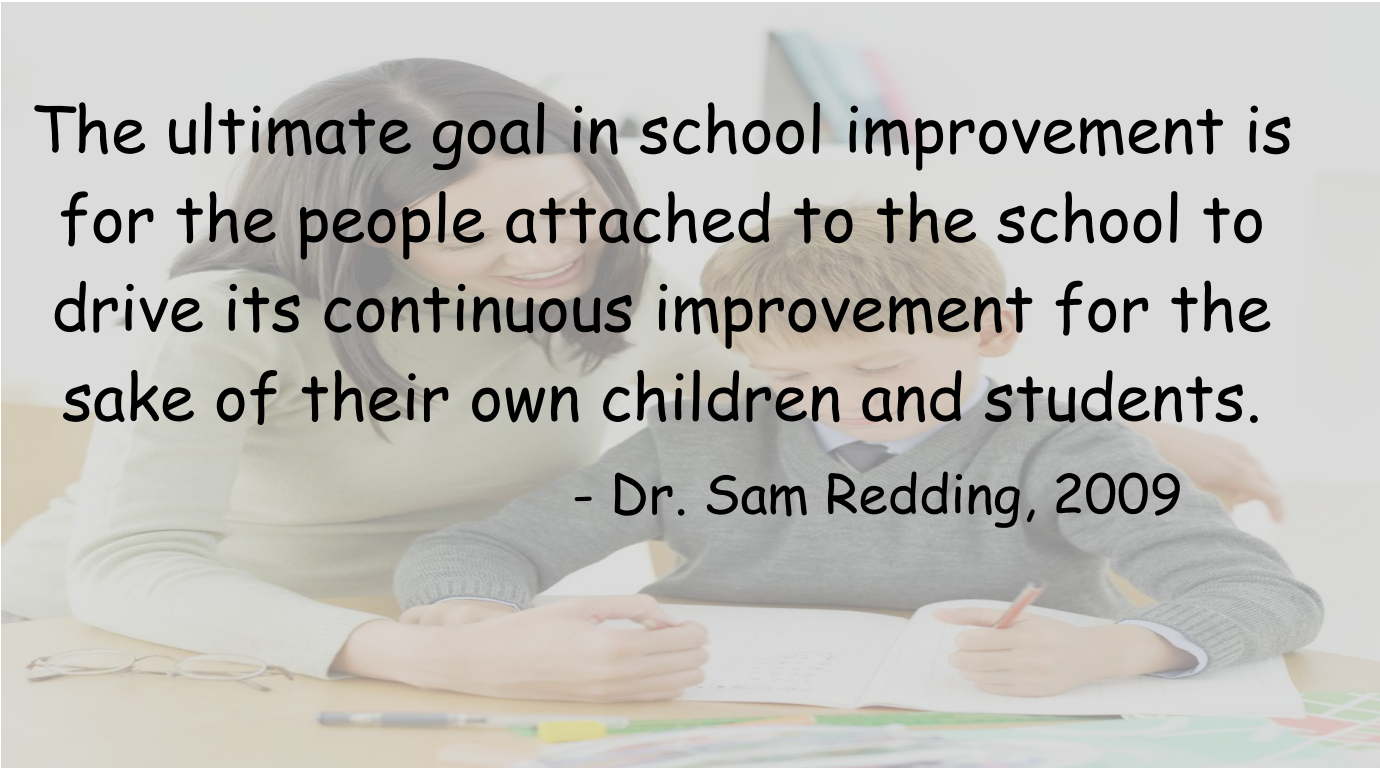
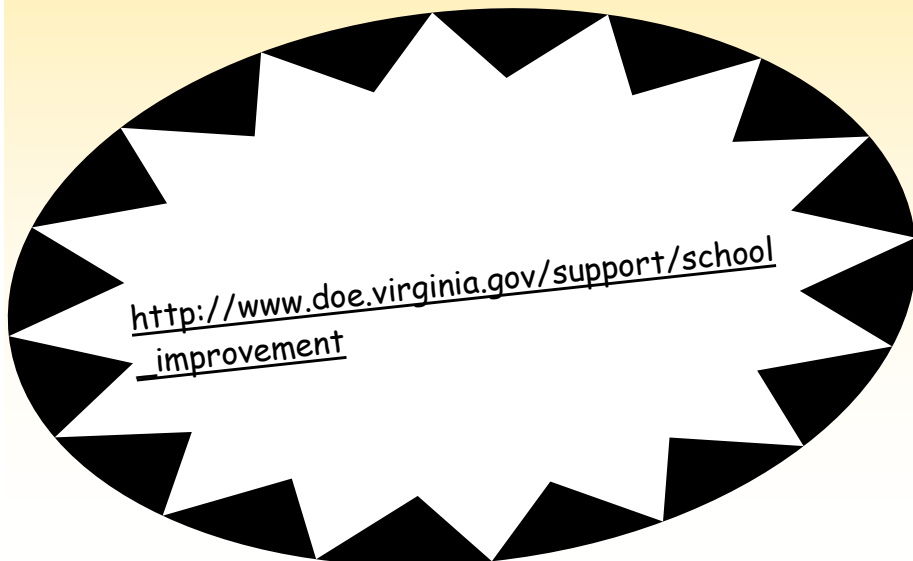
Ms. Annette Monroe-Martin
Educational Consultant
Annette.monroe-martin@doe.virginia.gov

Dr. Susan FitzPatrick
Grants and Programs
Susan.fitzpatrick@doe.virginia.gov

Ms. Janice Garland
NCLB Coordinator
Janice.pierson@doe.virginia.gov

Dr. Lynn Sodat
Accreditation Specialist
Lynn.sodat@doe.virginia.gov

The Office of School Improvement promotes student learning and achievement by assisting schools and school divisions in the implementation of effective instructional strategies and best practices. The responsibilities of the Office of School Improvement include school-level and division-level academic reviews, school improvement planning and innovative programs such as the Partnership for Achieving Successful Schools (PASS).



The ultimate goal in school improvement is for the people attached to the school to drive its continuous improvement for the sake of their own children and students.

- Dr. Sam Redding, 2009