

Board of Education Agenda Item

Item: I.

Date: October 25, 2006

Topic: First Review of the Memorandum of Understanding for Petersburg Public Schools in Accordance with Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia (SOA) 8 VAC 20-131-315

Presenter: Dr. Billy Cannaday, Superintendent of Public Instruction
Mr. Lloyd Hamlin, Superintendent, Petersburg Public Schools
Mr. Fred Wilson, School Board Chairman, Petersburg School Board

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Origin:

Topic presented for information only (no board action required)

Board review required by

State or federal law or regulation

Board of Education regulation

Other: _____

Previous Review/Action:

No previous board review/action

Previous review/action

date _____ action _____

Background Information:

In October 2004 the Virginia Board of Education considered criteria for identifying low-performing school divisions that would be eligible for a division-level academic review. At that time, Petersburg Public Schools met those criteria. Recognizing the need for technical assistance, the Petersburg School Board requested a voluntary division-level review. Petersburg Public Schools and the Virginia Board of Education signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) detailing the review process on April 21, 2004. The division-level review was conducted and a report of findings for that review was issued to Petersburg Public Schools after the May 25-27, 2004 visit. Subsequent to the review and findings, Petersburg Public Schools filed a corrective action plan on September 17, 2004, with specific action steps designed to address the findings of the review.

On February 2, 2005, a progress report on the action steps indicated in the corrective action plan was filed and presented to the Virginia Board of Education's Committee on Lowest Performing School Divisions. The superintendent and school board chairperson for Petersburg Public Schools identified the changes in high-level administration, constant turnover of faculty, and pressure from members of the community to implement new initiatives as barriers to division improvement.

Section 8 VAC 20-131-300 of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (SOA) requires schools to be assigned an accreditation rating. The ratings assigned to Petersburg Public Schools for the 2006-2007 academic year are listed below.

School	Accreditation Status	Areas Warned
A.P. Hill E. S.	Accreditation Denied	English, Mathematics, History, Science
Blandford E. S.	Accredited with Warning (2 years)	English
J.E.B. Stuart E. S.	Accreditation Denied	English, Mathematics
Peabody Middle	Accreditation Denied	English, Mathematics, History, Science
Petersburg High	Accreditation Denied	Mathematics, History, Science
Robert E. Lee E. S.	Accreditation Withheld/Improving	Mathematics
Vernon Johns Middle	Accredited with Warning (3 years)	English, Mathematics, History, Science
Walnut Hill E. S.	Fully Accredited	NA
Westview E. S.	Accredited with Warning (3 years)	English, Mathematics, History, Science

Section 8 VAC 20-131-315.B. of the SOA states:

Any school rated Accreditation Denied in accordance with 8 VAC 20-131-300 shall be subject to actions prescribed by the Board of Education and affirmed through a memorandum of understanding between the Board of Education and the local school board. The local school board shall submit a corrective action plan to the Board of Education for its consideration in prescribing actions in the memorandum of understanding within 45 days of notification of the rating. The memorandum of understanding shall be entered into no later than November 1 of the academic year in which the rating is awarded.

Petersburg Public Schools was notified in writing on September 11, 2006, that four schools were rated as Accreditation Denied for the 2006-2007 school year. To date, corrective action plans for these schools have not been submitted. Section 8 VAC 20-131-315.A. of the SOA states:

Any school rated Accreditation Denied in accordance with 8 VAC 20-131-300 shall be subject to actions prescribed by the Board of Education and shall provide parents of the enrolled students and other interested parties with the following:

1. Written notice of the school's accreditation rating within 30 calendar days of the notification of the rating from the Department of Education;
2. A copy of the school division's proposed corrective action plan, including a timeline for implementation, to improve the school's accreditation rating; and
3. An opportunity to comment on the division's proposed corrective action plan. Such public comments shall be received and considered by the school division prior to finalizing the school's corrective action plan and a Board of Education memorandum of understanding with the local school board.

Given that Petersburg Public Schools is in division-level academic review status, non-compliance issues with SOQ and SOA exists, and a majority of schools have a status of Accredited with Warning or Accreditation Denied, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for division-level academic review purposes will be combined with the required MOU for accredited denied schools.

Summary of Major Elements

The Framework for the Memorandum of Understanding for Petersburg Public Schools for 2006-09 is included as Attachment A. This framework was shared with the Petersburg School Board on October 12, 2006. According to the SOA guidelines that are being recommended for final approval on October 25, 2006, the Board of Education's review and approval process for the MOU may include a review by the committee of the Board, approval by the full Board, and signatures of the President of the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Board may also delegate the review and final approval of the MOU to the President of the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The Virginia Board of Education and the Department of Education will assign a chief academic officer (CAO) for 2006-2007 to work with the division superintendent to coordinate and monitor the implementation of daily activities associated with the MOU and corrective action plans. The CAO will coordinate the Department of Education's technical assistance in support of the MOU and corrective action plans for those schools denied accreditation.

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education accept for first review the Framework for the Memorandum of Agreement for Petersburg Public Schools for 2006-09 and delegate the review and final approval of the MOU to the President of the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction in accordance with SOA guidelines.

Impact on Resources:

Total costs associated with implementing the MOU are to be determined.

Timetable for Further Review/Action:

The specific terms of the MOU will be approved by the President of the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Petersburg Public School Board will present documentation for meeting the action requirements for schools rated Accreditation Denied as prescribed in the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (8 VAC 20-131-315.A.).

Virginia Board of Education
 Framework for the Memorandum of Understanding for Petersburg Public Schools
 (2006-09)

School Division Goals

By 2007:

- Decrease the failure rate in elementary mathematics and reading by 10%, maintain progress in science and history
- Decrease middle school mathematics and reading failure rate by 20%, science by 10%, history by 20%
- Maintain progress in high school English, decrease failure rate in math, science, and history by 20%
- Five schools will meet AYP by traditional method or safe harbor
- Three schools will be fully accredited

By 2008:

- Five schools will be fully accredited
- Seven schools meet AYP

By 2009:

- No schools will remain in accredited denied status

Administrative Responsibilities

Program Coherence

- Develop a consolidated federal application that complies with the findings of the efficiency review that
 - Focuses on improved student achievement
 - Connects strategies to the division's corrective action plan
- Develop and implement a corrective action plan that complies with the findings of the efficiency review, focuses on improved student achievement, and connects strategies to the following state and federally funded initiatives:
 - Algebra readiness
 - Early reading initiative
 - Project graduation
 - Mathematics-Science partnership
 - Hard-to-staff initiative
 - Special initiative grants

Effective Use of Assessment Data

- Develop a structured protocol for how schools are to report and share data district-to-school and school-to-district
- Implement a data monitoring process with accountability for results to improve student achievement
- Link school and division professional development supported by data to improving student achievement

Teacher Quality

- Develop and monitor individual action plans to reduce provisional licenses
- Implement a research-based hard-to-staff incentive program

Student Services and Safe and Secure Schools

- Develop, implement, and monitor a structured protocol for disciplining students with disabilities
- Link school safety strategies to the division's corrective action plan

Reporting Requirements

- Provide bi-weekly written reports to the Petersburg School Board and Department of Education
- Provide quarterly reports to the State Board of Education School Accountability Sub-committee
- Provide summative report on progress made in meeting or exceeding memorandum of understanding agreements and expectations

School Board Responsibilities

School Board/ Central Office Leadership and Development

- Adopt (3-5) key priorities for improving student achievement across the school division
- Ensure alignment of resources with these priorities for improving student achievement
- Hold the board and staff accountable for results

School Board/State Board/ Department of Education

- Agree to work together in developing a major restructuring of schools if significant improvements in student achievement and school accreditation do not occur for the 2006-07 school year