



Virginia Tiered System of Supports (VTSS)

Cohort 3

2015 Overview and Application Instructions

Please return by **June 30, 2015**, to:

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Virginia Department of Education
P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120

Virginia Tiered System of Supports (VTSS) Cohort 3

INVITATION TO APPLY

RATIONALE AND OVERVIEW

Positive school climate is an integral component of an effective school where students thrive both socially and academically. Research consistently identifies school climate as being linked to positive outcomes, including increased student achievement, reduced instances of behavior problems, and reduced absences and suspensions. A positive school climate has also been associated with social-emotional factors, such as high levels of self-esteem and psychological well-being. The U.S. Department of Education (USED) recently emphasized that engaging in deliberate efforts to create a positive school climate is the first step in *“building safe and supportive schools conducive to academic excellence and student success.”*¹

The use of a multi-tiered system of behavioral supports, such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), has been shown to promote a positive school climate.² As such, the School Climate Transformation (SCT) program, funded through a federal grant from USED, focuses on expanding and enhancing the implementation of PBIS within the Virginia Tiered System of Supports (VTSS) in Virginia. The SCT program will fund training and technical assistance efforts provided to the VTSS Cohort 3 schools divisions and schools. No funds will be directly provided to divisions through this program.

The Virginia Tiered System of Support (VTSS) is a statewide, coordinated, tiered approach to improving educational outcomes through a continuum of academic and behavior supports for all students. The Cohort 3 participating divisions will implement the VTSS framework in their schools supported by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), with an initial emphasis on Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS). Divisions and participating schools will refine the behavioral core instruction and enhance evidence-based interventions for students requiring targeted assistance. Through data driven decision making, participating divisions and schools will guide ongoing practices for both academic and behavioral approaches to support student achievement. In addition to research-based and evidence-based academic and behavioral interventions and data driven decision making, participating schools will receive support to increase family and community engagement. Our goal for the VTSS Cohort 3 is to improve school climate and behavioral outcomes for all students.

¹ U.S. Department of Education. *Guiding Principles: A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline*, Washington, D.C., 2014.

² Bradshaw, C., Koth, C. W., Thornton, L. A., & Leaf, P. J. (2009). Altering school climate through schoolwide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports: Findings from a group-randomized effectiveness trial. *Prevention Science*.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

Each division and participating school(s) in the VTSS Cohort 3 will receive the following support:

- A two-year training plan will be developed in collaboration with each division leadership team within three months of selection. The training plan will include regional trainings and an annual statewide training event;
- On-site technical assistance provided by assigned VTSS coaches;
- Systems Coaching training for division leaders;
- Access to webinar and Web-based professional learning modules;
- Training and site license(s) to SWIS, a Web-based information system to collect, summarize, and use student behavior data for decision making [*optional*];
- Self-assessment of implementation facilitated regularly to ascertain progress; and
- Assistance with the alignment of activities and requirements with the VDOE Office of School Improvement and other VDOE activities.

REQUIREMENTS OF PARTICIPANTS

- The division will establish and maintain a division leadership team, including a VTSS-PBIS division coordinator and other key central office personnel for the life of the SCT grant program (2015-2019);
- Each participating school will establish and maintain a school leadership team, including the principal, general and special education teachers, student support specialists, and other specialists for the life of the SCT grant program (2015-2019);
- The VTSS division leadership team will collaborate with school leadership teams to plan and to implement VTSS;
- The division, with assistance from the VDOE, will provide professional development and follow-up to ensure implementation of effective instruction and implementation of interventions with fidelity. Time will be allocated for staff members to engage in professional learning;
- School division personnel who are providing leadership in VTSS implementation (including some building-level personnel) will attend all training sessions sponsored by the VDOE as outlined in the training plan. Divisions will fund all costs associated with travel to the training sessions, such as mileage and per diem;
- The division will participate in all evaluation activities as outlined by project evaluators contracted by VDOE. This will include data collection and submission at the building level related to school climate, behavior, academics, and fidelity of implementation;
- The division will use data to guide decision making for academic and behavioral instruction and intervention;
- The division will use evidence based academic and behavior instruction and intervention;
- The division leadership team, with assistance from the VDOE, will build capacity to implement the VTSS with additional schools in the division.

PREPARING THE APPLICATION

All applications must be prepared in accordance with the specifications below. Applications must include:

- 1) Documentation of VTSS-PBIS Exploration Activities (Section A)
- 2) VTSS Requirements Form (Section B);
- 3) VTSS Signature Page with original signatures (Section C);
- 4) Appendices of additional “value added” documentation/resources and letters of support (Optional; attach additional pages as necessary).

One electronic copy of the proposal must be received by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, June 30, 2015. The original proposal must be postmarked by June 30, 2015, and it must bear an original signature of the Superintendent of Schools on the VTSS Signature Page. All proposals become the property of VDOE.

Electronic copies should be sent via e-mail to Maribel Saimre at Maribel.Saimre@doe.virginia.gov and include “VTSS Cohort 3 Application” in the subject line.

Original (hard copy) proposals should be mailed to:

VTSS Cohort 3 Application
Maribel Saimre
Virginia Department of Education
P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, VA 23218-2120

PROPOSAL REVIEW AND SELECTION

Schools will be selected as follows:

- 1) Screening – Proposals will be screened to ensure that all required components of the applications were submitted;
- 2) Review – Complete applications will be reviewed by a committee assembled by VDOE;
- 3) Selection – Divisions will be selected for participation in VTSS Cohort 3 by August 1, 2015.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions, please contact a member of the VTSS Team listed below:

Maribel Saimre, School Psychology Specialist, (804) 692-0396 or
maribel.saimre@doe.virginia.gov

Dr. Thomas Manthey, VTSS Coordinator, (804) 225-4024 or
tom.manthey@doe.virginia.gov