

Board of Education Agenda Item

Item: J.

Date: May 21, 2008

Topic: Report on Petersburg City School's Implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding and Findings of the Division-Level Review

Presenter: Mrs. Shelley Loving-Ryder, Assistant Superintendent, Division of Student Assessment and School Improvement

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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: _____

Action requested at this meeting Action requested at future meeting: _____ (date)

Previous Review/Action:

No previous board review/action

Previous review/action

date _____

action _____

Background Information:

The Standards of Quality require local school boards to maintain fully accredited schools and to take corrective actions for schools that are not fully accredited.

§ [22.1-253.13:3](#). Standard 3. Accreditation, other standards and evaluation.

...Each local school board shall maintain schools that are fully accredited pursuant to the standards of accreditation as prescribed by the Board of Education. Each local school board shall review the accreditation status of all schools in the local school division annually in public session. Within the time specified by the Board of Education, each school board shall submit corrective action plans for any schools within its school division that have been designated as not meeting the standards as approved by the Board.

In October 2004 the Virginia Board of Education (BOE) established criteria for identifying low-performing school divisions to undergo a division-level academic review. Petersburg City Public Schools met the criteria for division-level academic review.

§ [22.1-253.13:3](#). Standard 3. Accreditation, other standards and evaluation.

...When the Board of Education has obtained evidence through the school academic review process that the failure of schools within a division to achieve full accreditation status is related to division level failure to implement the Standards of Quality, the Board may require a division level academic review. After the conduct of such review and within the time specified by the Board of Education, each school board shall submit for approval by the Board a corrective action plan, consistent with criteria established by the Board and setting forth specific actions and a schedule designed to ensure that schools within its school division achieve full accreditation status. Such corrective action plans shall be part of the relevant school division's comprehensive plan pursuant to § [22.1-253.13:6](#).

In 2004, recognizing the need for technical assistance, the Petersburg School Board requested a division-level review and assistance from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). Petersburg Public Schools and the Virginia Board of Education (BOE) signed an initial memorandum of understanding (MOU) detailing the review process on April 21, 2004. Petersburg Public Schools has been in division-level review status since 2004 and has reported to the BOE regularly on the status of implementing the corrective action plan and the terms of the initial MOU. The VDOE has provided ongoing technical assistance and monitored the implementation of the division's corrective action plan.

Based on 2005-2006 assessment results and the resulting accreditation and federal adequate yearly progress (AYP) ratings of the division and its schools, Petersburg Public Schools entered into a second MOU on November 20, 2006. This MOU with the BOE required Petersburg Public Schools to continue in division-level academic review status and participate in an academic review process prescribed by the BOE.

Additionally, Section 8 VAC 20-131.300 of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (SOA), adopted by the Board in September 2006, requires school divisions with Accreditation Denied schools to enter into an MOU with the BOE and implement a corrective action plan to improve student achievement in the identified schools. As a part of this MOU, a corrective action plan was developed.

The Petersburg School Board and Central Office staff adopted five key priorities for improving student achievement across the school division, ensuring alignment of resources with these priorities for improving student achievement, and holding the Board and staff accountable for results. These priorities are aligned with the expectations in this MOU and the following areas of focus:

- Student Achievement
- Leadership Capacity
- Teacher Quality
- Communication with all Stakeholders
- Safe and Secure Environment

The following performance objectives were established in the MOU:

“In 2007-2008, Petersburg Public Schools will:

1. Meet AYP requirements in at least seven (7) schools by achieving established benchmarks or through the “safe harbor” method for all subgroups

2. Achieve full accreditation in at least seven (7) schools.”

Based on Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and accreditation data for 2007-2008, these objectives have not been met.

The BOE implemented a provision in the Appropriation Act that permitted it to authorize an efficiency review as part of a division-level academic review process. As a part of the MOU, Petersburg Public Schools was required to incorporate 40% of the recommendations of the efficiency review by January 1, 2008 and half of the recommendations by January 1, 2009.

As a result of the efficiency review completed on January 10, 2007, by MGT of America, Inc., 90 recommendations were indicated, 38 of which were accompanied by fiscal implications. Full implementation of the recommendations in this report would generate a total savings of \$34,620,950 over a five-year period. On July 24, 2007, Petersburg Public Schools reported to the School and Division Accountability Committee of the BOE which recommendations had been fully implemented, those which were in progress, and those that were to be done. A proposed timeline for completion was provided for each recommendation that was in progress and those not yet started. Another update was provided on October 17, 2007, to the School and Division Accountability Committee.

As required by the MOU, the BOE and the VDOE assigned a Chief Academic Officer (CAO) to work with the superintendent and administrative staff to coordinate and monitor the implementation of processes, procedures, and strategies associated with the corrective action plan resulting from the MOU. The CAO coordinates with VDOE offices to provide technical assistance in support of the MOU and corrective action plan. The CAO has administrative authority over processes, procedures, and strategies that are implemented in support of the MOU and funded by targeted federal and state funds with subsequent review and approval by the Petersburg School Board.

The MOU also indicates key administrative responsibilities to raise student achievement. One of these responsibilities includes teacher quality. As indicated in the MOU, the central office leadership team under the direction of the CAO or designee is to develop and monitor individual action plans to reduce provisional licenses for teachers and implement a research-based hard-to-staff incentive program. The MOU requires Petersburg Public Schools to commit to hiring personnel who are the most qualified for the position vacancy.

As required by the MOU, the Petersburg School Board, BOE and VDOE are developing a contingency plan for major restructuring to be adopted by fall 2008 and implemented in 2009-2010. This plan is needed due to the lack of significant improvements in student achievement and school accreditation under the MOU.

The MOU requires the Petersburg School Board to provide a summative report on progress made in meeting or exceeding MOU agreements and expectations to the BOE and the VDOE, as requested. These reports have been provided to the School and Division Accountability Committee on February 27, 2007, May 30, 2007, July 24, 2007, October 17, 2007, January 9, 2008, and April 23, 2008.

At the April 23, 2008, meeting of the School and Division Accountability Committee, members of committee requested information on the following:

1. the number of students enrolled in alternative education programs and their status in these programs;
2. the number of students enrolled in the Individual Student Alternative Education Program;

- and,
3. the number of unlicensed teachers (substitute teachers) by core content area in which they are currently teaching.

Summary of Major Elements:

VDOE staff will present information regarding the questions raised by the School and Division Accountability Committee on April 23, 2008. Specifically, information regarding Petersburg Public School's alternative education programs and ISAEP program will be presented as well as data regarding unlicensed teachers and the core content area in which they are currently teaching.

Petersburg Public Schools has been asked to respond to the information to be presented by VDOE.

In addition, Petersburg Public Schools will present information regarding the following:

1. evidence that the system is maintaining an efficiently run school system to ensure that more resources can be directed to the classroom to support improved student achievement;
2. evidence that the system has a plan to ensure that every school has highly qualified teachers needed to improve student achievement; and
3. evidence that the system has a plan to ensure that every school has a strong, instructional leader (principal) at the building level that will facilitate the creation of a school environment that attracts and retains strong teachers; and, demonstrate that quality instruction and high student achievement are top priorities.

Superintendent's Recommendation:

No action is required. This report is for informational purposes only.

Impact on Resources:

There is no impact on agency resources.

Timetable for Further Review/Action:

Petersburg Public Schools will report on the status of the MOU at the July 24, 2008, BOE meeting.