

Board of Education Agenda Item

Item: H.

Date: November 20, 2008

Topic: Report from the Petersburg City School Board on the Virginia Board of Education's Request to Begin Planning for the Implementation of the Restructuring Contingency Plan for the 2009-2010 School Year

Presenter: Dr. Kathleen M. Smith, Director, Office of School Improvement, Division of Student Assessment and School Improvement
Mr. Kenneth L. Pritchett, President, Petersburg City School Board
Dr. James M. Victory, Superintendent, Petersburg City Public Schools

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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: _____

Previous Review/Action:

No previous board review/action

Previous review/action

date September 25, 2008

action Request that the Petersburg City School Board plan for the implementation of the contingency restructuring proposal in the 2009-2010 school year

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 (VBOE) 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 as indicated in Section 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 Section [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 VBOE 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 VBOE 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 VBOE.

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 a MOU with the BOE and implement a corrective action plan to improve student achievement in the identified schools. Since Petersburg Public Schools have schools in accreditation denied status for the 2007-2008 academic year based on 2006-2007 results, the VBOE determined that the MOU for division-level academic review would also serve as the MOU to satisfy Section 8 VAC 20-131-310. As a part of this MOU, a corrective action plan was developed.

The MOU specifies that a contingency plan be developed if the schools do not meet school accreditation targets. The MOU states:

The Petersburg School Board, Virginia Board of Education, and the Department of Education will develop a contingency plan for major restructuring to be in place for the 2007-2008 school year if significant improvements in student achievement and school accreditation do not occur for the 2006-2007 school year. The decision to begin the planning for restructuring will be based on reports provided by Petersburg Public Schools to both the Virginia Board of Education and department staff as well as recommendations made by the chief academic officer (CAO) throughout the year.

Although the development of the contingency restructuring plan was implemented one year later than

planned in the MOU, a committee of outside experts from universities, community-based organizations working in Petersburg, the CAO, and department staff met during the 2007-2008 year after assessments given in 2006-2007 resulted in the division not meeting accountability goals of the MOU for two consecutive years. This committee developed an instructional intervention to be led by an outside entity for middle school students to begin in 2009-2010. On June 18, 2008, the plan was presented to the Accountability Committee for Schools and Divisions. A copy of the plan for the proposed middle grades restructuring model is included as Attachment A. This plan meets the following conditions agreed upon by the Board of Education and Petersburg Public Schools:

1. Alternative governance.
2. Choice option for middle school students and parents.
3. Research-based focus on core content.
4. Recruitment, selection, and supervision of highly qualified personnel by an independent entity.
5. Proven track record of educational success.

Federal school improvement funds that are allocated only to local education agencies (LEA) with schools in improvement are available to cover the start-up costs for program development and implementation planning.

On September 25, 2008, the VBOE requested that the Petersburg City School Board plan for the implementation of the contingency restructuring proposal in the 2009-2010 school year as described in Attachment A and authorized the Department of Education to assist Petersburg Public Schools in such planning by providing available federal resources.

Summary of Major Elements:

Petersburg Public Schools will report on the status of the VBOE's request that the Petersburg City School Board plan for the implementation of the contingency restructuring plan in the 2009-2010 school year.

Superintendent's Recommendation: The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the VBOE accept Petersburg's report on the VBOE's request that the Petersburg City School Board plan for the implementation of the contingency restructuring plan in the 2009-2010 school year.

Impact on Resources: If the Petersburg School Board proceeds with planning to implement the contingency restructuring plan, the department will provide available federal school improvement funds to Petersburg to plan for contingency restructuring.

Timetable for Further Review/Action: As part of the MOU, Petersburg makes quarterly reports to the VBOE. The next quarterly report will be made on January 15, 2009.

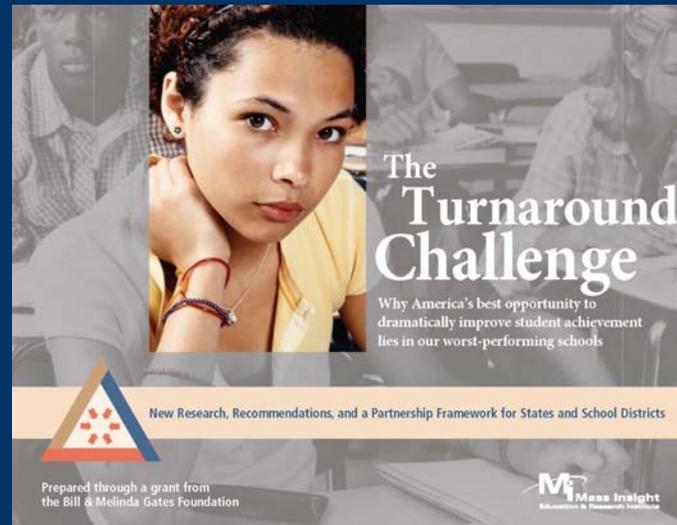
Petersburg Contingency and Restructuring Work Group

June 18, 2008

Committee's Charge Was Limited in Scope to the Middle Grades 6-8

- Alternative governance
- Choice option for middle school students and parents
- Research-based focus on core content
- Recruitment, selection, and supervision of highly qualified personnel by an independent entity
- Proven track record of educational success

Meeting *The Turnaround Challenge*

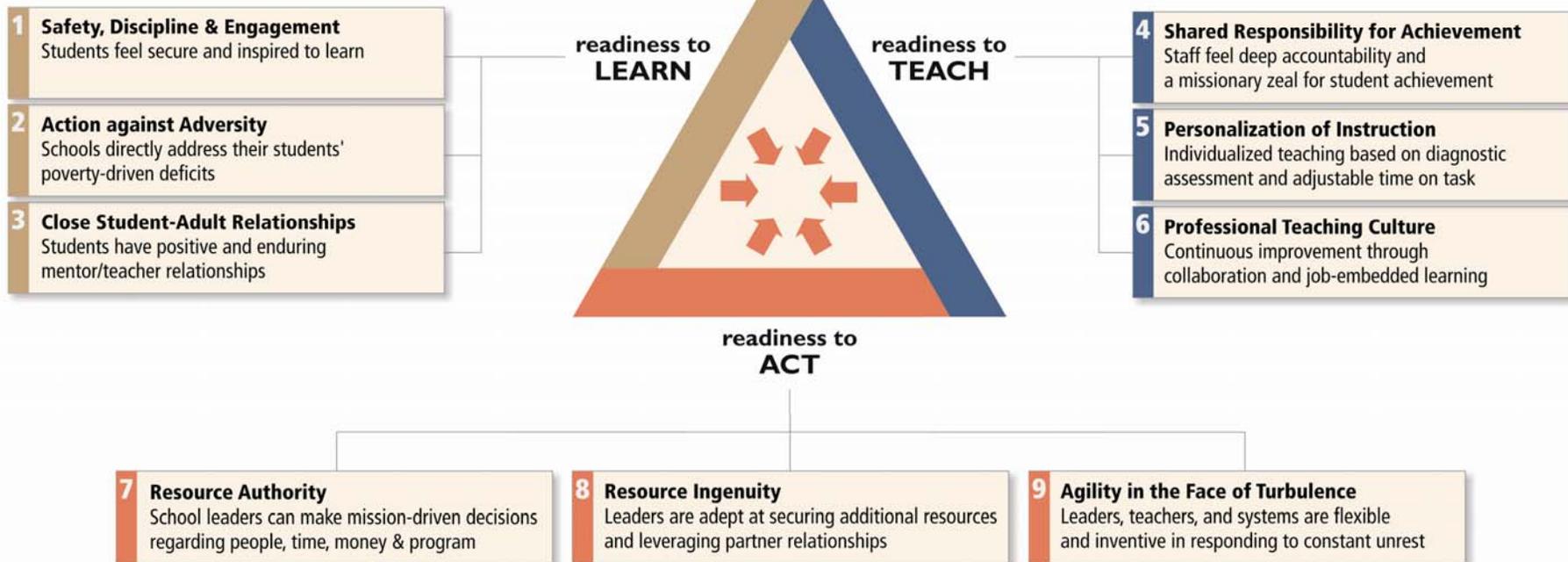


Analysis and Recommendations from the report produced by Mass Insight Education & Research Institute, Inc.

— Developed under a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation —

How do high-performing, high-poverty schools do it? They foster students' *readiness to learn*; focus staff's *readiness to teach*; and expand their *readiness to act*.

HPHP READINESS MODEL





Why has so little fundamental change occurred in failing schools to date?

Lack of leverage: No real help from NCLB; incremental reforms remain the common choice

Lack of capacity: In state agencies, districts, schools, partners

Lack of exemplars: No successful models at scale, no real consensus even on definitions

Lack of public will: Failing schools have no constituency; hence, insufficient funding to date



These gaps have led to state strategies that are insufficient to meet the challenge:

Insufficient incentives for educators to choose major change

- **Too few *positive incentives***: reasons to opt into real transformation
- **No *negative incentives***: unattractive consequences for inaction
- **Lack of aggressive, clear performance targets**

Insufficient comprehensiveness, intensity, and sustainability

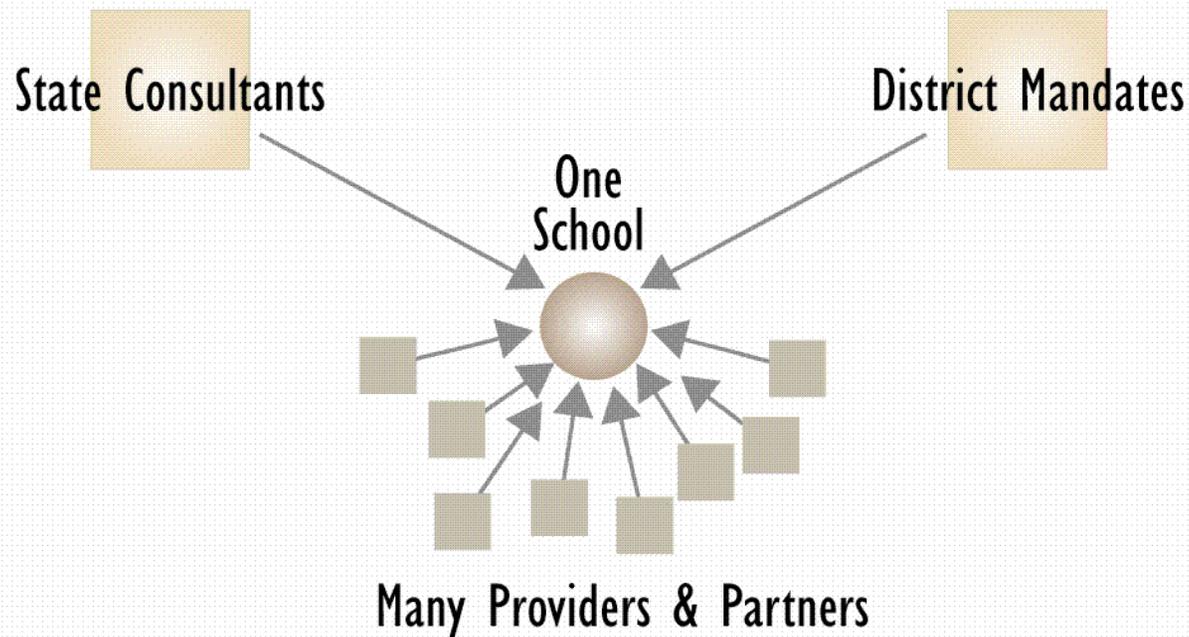
- **No state engagement in changing *conditions*** – rules for adults
- **No overall “people strategy”** – developing *capacity* for turnaround
- **No school *clustering***: limits effectiveness and scale
- **All “loose,” no “tight”**: e.g., more systematic on curriculum, PD
- **Limited partner support**: “light touch,” small scale, fragmented
- **Limited district connection to school improvement effort**

Insufficient commitment from the state

- **Lack of high-visibility public and private sector commitment**
- **SEA lacks sufficient flexibility, authority, resources**

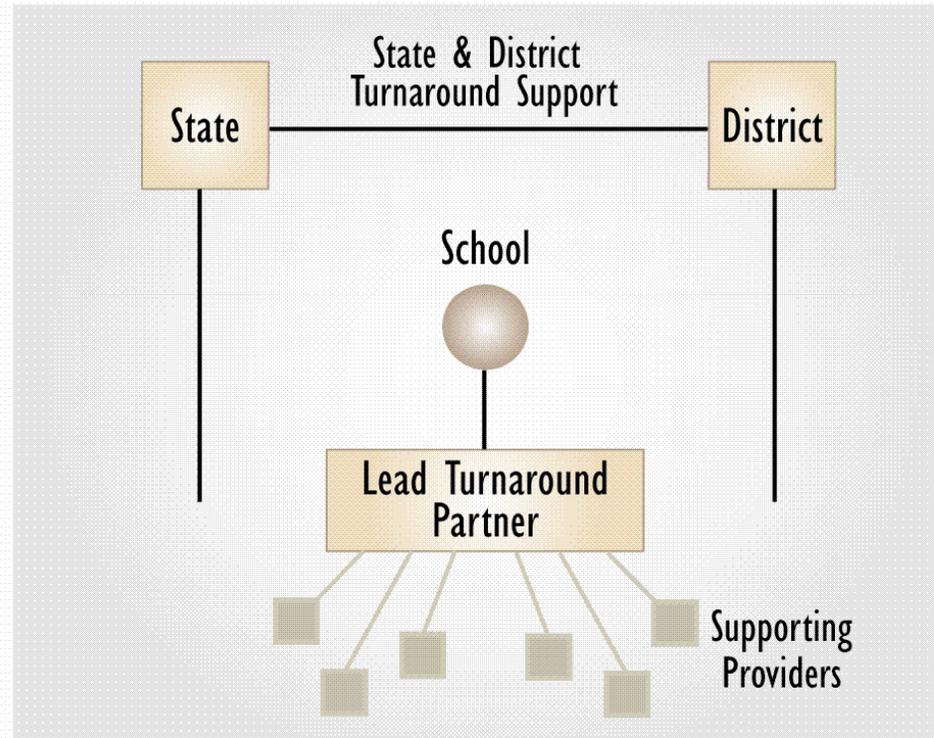
Capacity-Building: Addressing the “projectitis” afflicting school reform

“Old World” Intervention Capacity & Roles:
Fragmented, Competing Improvement Projects

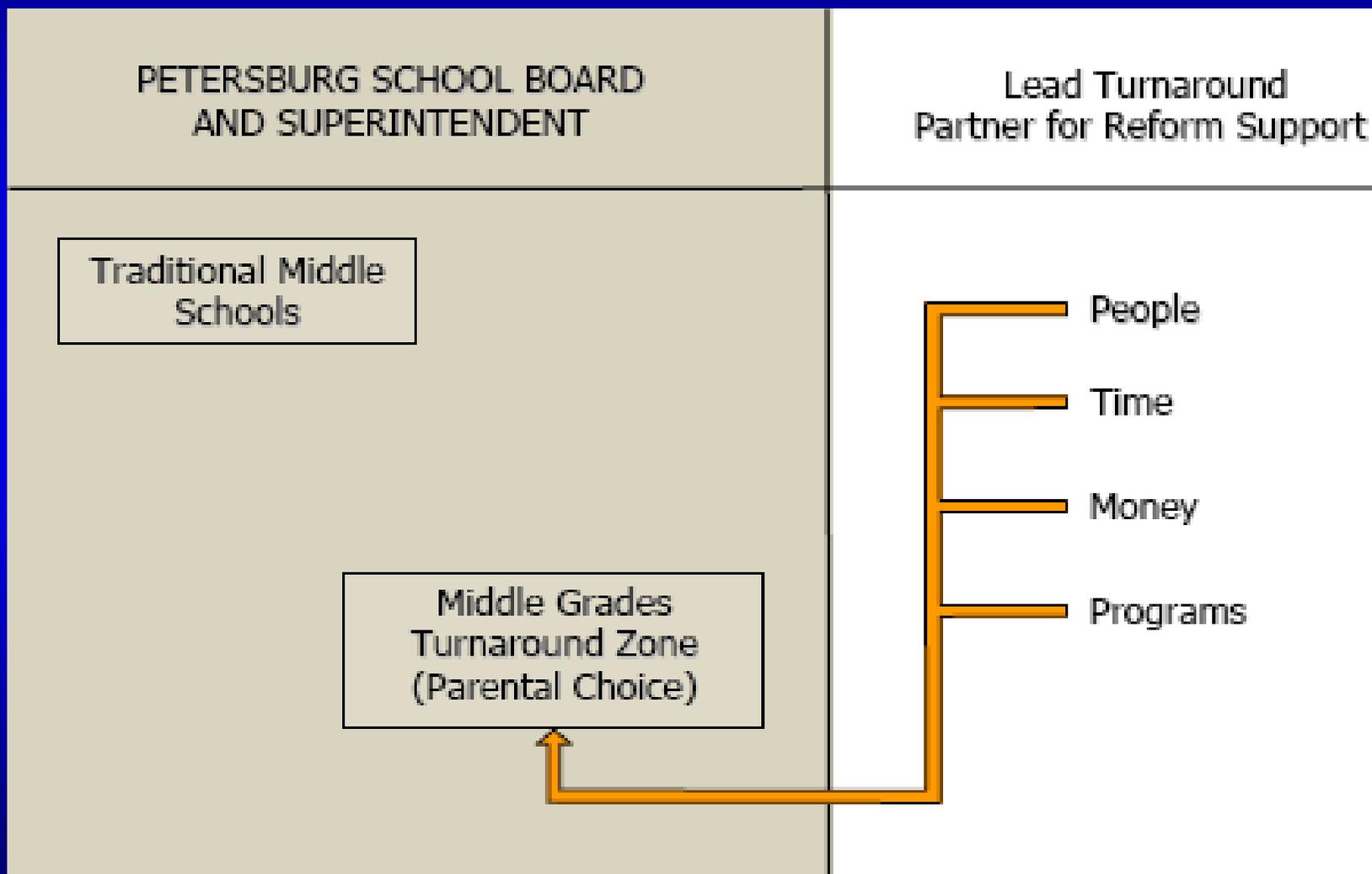


A new model: deeply embedded lead turnaround partners, integrating the work of other providers

"New World" Capacity & Roles within a Comprehensive Turnaround Framework



“An outside-the-system approach inside-the-system ”



Petersburg's Middle Grades Turnaround Zone

- Driven by parental choice to provide all students with an opportunity to attend the “turnaround zone”
- Shared accountability between the Petersburg School Board and the Lead Turnaround Partner
- Led by a Lead Turnaround Partner with a proven record of success
- Led by a Lead Turnaround Partner that provides deep, systemic instructional reform
- Centered on the Lead Turnaround Partner providing an outside-the-system approach inside-the-system

Petersburg's Middle Grades Turnaround Zone, Continued

- Facilitated through a partnership with the Parents, Lead Turnaround Partner, Petersburg School Board, Virginia Department of Education, and Virginia Board of Education through a Memorandum of Understanding
- Funding for the “turnaround zone” is provided by the Petersburg School Board on a prorated per pupil cost which is aligned to the cost per pupil of non-turnaround zone middle school students – but finances remain with Petersburg School Board
- Employ research-based strategies that provide an immediate and dramatic turnaround in student achievement

Lead Turnaround Partner Changing Conditions – People

- **Recruit and select teachers and a program leader who have a proven record of success of increasing student achievement**
- **Structure teacher and principal contracts**
- **Develop and engage teachers and principal in professional development aligned to programmatic goals**
- **Promote student motivation for learning**

Lead Turnaround Partner Changing Conditions – People, Continued

- **Secure parental commitment and involvement through school choice**
- **Promote parental capacity to support student engagement, motivation, and learning within school, at home and in the community**
- **Secure community support to garner human resources needed for reform**
- **Evaluate teacher and principal performance and outcomes and make staffing recommendations accordingly**

Lead Turnaround Partner Changing Conditions – People, Continued

- **Develop constructive relationships with existing school personnel**
- **Expand on existing community commitment and support to garner resources needed for the reform**

Lead Turnaround Partner Changing Conditions – Time

- **Change the school calendar according to student and program needs, for example, year-round schools or extending the length of the school day**
 - **Require commitment from parents to allow for additional time for instruction (such as after-school support)**
 - **Require commitment from teachers to allow for additional time for instruction and professional development**

Lead Turnaround Partner Changing Conditions – Program

- **Maintain authority and autonomy over programs**
- **Provide comprehensive, coherent, manageable, and integrated instructional and support programs**
- **Maintain authority to determine which programs are used and which programs are to be eliminated**
- **Align curriculum, instruction, classroom formative assessment and sustained professional development to build rigor, student-teacher relationships, and provide relevant instruction that engages and motivates students**

Lead Turnaround Partner Changing Conditions – Program, Continued

- **Organize programming to engage students' sense of adventure, camaraderie, and competition**
- **Develop and implement evidence-based discipline programs that minimize time out of school and/or class**
- **Secure supporting partners to address social, emotional and behavioral issues (e.g., over-age students)**
- **Collaborate, identify and secure adequate materials from LEA resources (such as Algebra Readiness Diagnostic Assessment)**
- **Identify and secure outside resources needed in the reform effort**

Lead Turnaround Partner – Money

- **Develop a budget based on available prorated per pupil amounts of local, basic SOQ, school improvement, appropriate Title monies, and special education funding in addition to other sources identified and aligned specifically for the turnaround zone**
- **Basic SOQ funding provided by the Petersburg School Board – but the responsibility for finances remains with the Petersburg School Board**
- **Seek outside funding from the greater community (business, private foundations, federal, state sources) to support the reform effort**

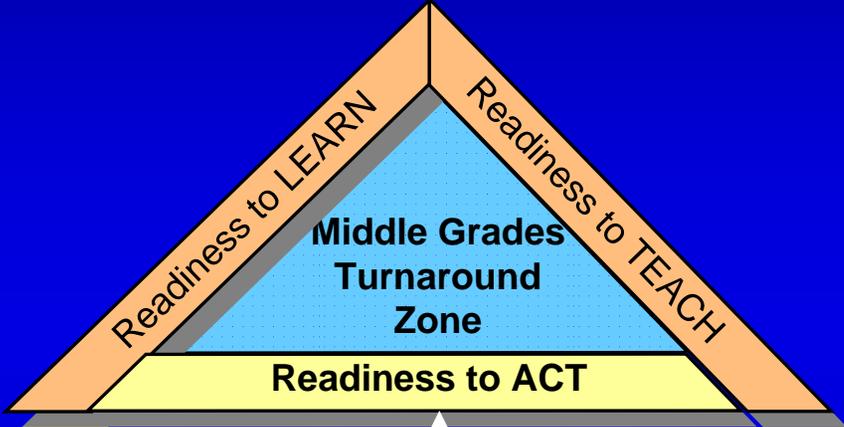
Virginia State Board of Education

Parental Choice

Petersburg School Board

Virginia Department of Education-- Chief Academic Officer

Superintendent and Division Staff



Lead Turnaround Partner for Reform Support

People: Authority over selection, compensation and work rules

Time: Authority over scheduling, longer day, longer year

Program: Flexibility to shape program to students' needs and turnaround priorities

Money: More budget flexibility, more resources

Did We Meet the Charge?

- ✓ **Alternative governance**
- ✓ **Choice option for middle grade students and parents**
- ✓ **Research-based focus on core content**
- ✓ **Recruitment, selection, and supervision of highly qualified personnel by an independent entity**
- ✓ **Organization with track record of educational success**