

Board of Education Agenda Item

Item: _____ L. _____

Date: May 27, 2010

Topic: Report on the Memorandum of Understanding for Petersburg City Public Schools to Include Compliance with the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia (SOA) 8 VAC 20-131-315

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

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Origin:

____ Topic presented for information only (no board action required)

X Board review required by

____ State or federal law or regulation

X Board of Education regulation

____ Other: _____

____ Action requested at this meeting ____ Action requested at future meeting: _____

Previous Review/Action:

____ No previous board review/action

X Previous review/action

date November 17, 2009

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.

§ [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 City School Board requested a division-level academic review and assistance from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). Petersburg City Public Schools and the VBOE signed an initial Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) detailing the review process on April 21, 2004.

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

In the November 2006 MOU, the Petersburg City 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. The key priorities included:

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

As part of the November 2006 MOU, an efficiency review was completed on January 10, 2007, by MGT of America, Inc. Ninety (90) recommendations were indicated, 38 of which were accompanied by fiscal implications. According to the review, full implementation of the recommendations would generate a total savings of \$34,620,950 over a five-year period. Petersburg City Public Schools has provided periodic updates regarding the implementation of the efficiency review.

As required by the November 2006 MOU, the VBOE 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 coordinated 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 City School Board.

As a result of the collaborative efforts of the superintendent, administrative staff and the CAO, Petersburg City Public Schools has four of its seven schools fully accredited for the 2009-2010 school year: Robert E. Lee Elementary School, Walnut Hill Elementary School, A. P. Hill Elementary School, and Petersburg High School. Four of six Title I schools remain in school improvement.

Another area of concern addressed in the November 2006 MOU was the limited number of highly-qualified teachers employed by the division as well as the number of teachers who were provisionally licensed and the number of long-term substitutes employed as teachers in core content areas. On November 17, 2009, Petersburg City Public Schools reported that of the 376 teachers employed in September 2009, 376 (100 percent) were licensed and 29 (7.7 percent) were new teachers. Five teachers were identified as long-term substitutes.

The November 2006 MOU specified target goals for three years ending after the 2008-2009 school year. Additionally, Section 8 VAC 20-131-300 of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (SOA), adopted by the VBOE in July 2009, requires school divisions with *Accreditation Denied* schools to enter into a MOU with the VBOE and implement a corrective action plan to improve student achievement in the identified schools. In November 2009 a revised MOU was approved by the Board of Education. Since Petersburg City Public Schools has schools in *Accreditation Denied* status for the 2009-2010 academic year based on 2008-2009 results, the current MOU for division-level academic review also serves as the MOU to satisfy Section 8 VAC 20-131-310. As a part of the proposed MOU, a corrective action plan must be developed. The current MOU will be in place until all schools are fully accredited. Under the current MOU, the Petersburg City School Board and central office staff adopted two key priorities: *leadership capacity* and *teacher quality*.

The VBOE and the VDOE have continued to assign a CAO to work with the superintendent and administrative staff to develop, coordinate and monitor the implementation of processes, procedures, and strategies associated with the corrective action plan resulting from the proposed 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 City School Board.

Petersburg City Public Schools has continued to provide the CAO with an office in the central administration office; telephone, computer, and printer access, and clerical support, as needed. Key administrative responsibilities included in the MOU are as follows:

Student Achievement

1. The central office leadership team under the direction of the CAO or designee will develop a consolidated federal application each year of the proposed MOU that complies with the findings of the efficiency review, focuses on improved student achievement, and connects strategies to the division's corrective action plan. The Petersburg City School Board will review and approve the consolidated federal application.

2. The central office leadership team under the direction of the CAO and Petersburg City School Board will 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 full implementation of the algebra readiness and early reading initiatives.
3. The central office staff will provide monthly written reports on the implementation of the algebra readiness and early reading initiatives to include activities planned, activities completed, timelines, participation targets and requests for reimbursement to the CAO and the Petersburg City School Board.
4. The central office will work with school staff to implement effective corrective action plans for all schools that are in *Accreditation Denied* status and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) restructuring. The corrective action plans must meet the requirements of NCLB and the Standards of Accreditation (SOA) and be aligned with the division's key strategies for improved student achievement. Corrective action plans must be approved by the Petersburg City School Board, VBOE and VDOE. Additionally, progress reports on implementing the plans will be shared quarterly with these entities.
5. The central office will work with VDOE staff and the CAO to identify one or more external turnaround partners for the implementation of a specific restructuring plan that meets the requirements of NCLB for all schools in restructuring under NCLB and is approved by the VDOE.

Leadership Capacity

Petersburg City Public Schools will implement an accountability system that links leadership of both the school and the division to student achievement data and provides professional development to improve student achievement. Petersburg City Public Schools will demonstrate commitment to hiring school and division staff with a proven record of increasing student achievement.

Teacher Quality

The central office leadership team under the direction of the CAO or designee will develop and monitor individual action plans to reduce the incidence of teachers with provisional licenses. Petersburg City Public Schools will commit to hiring personnel who are the most qualified for the position vacancy and have a proven track record of increasing student achievement.

As a part of the MOU, the Petersburg City School Board continues to provide summative reports on progress made in meeting or exceeding MOU agreements and expectations to the VBOE and VDOE, as requested.

The November 2006 MOU specified that a contingency plan be developed if the schools did not meet school accreditation targets:

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 CAO throughout the year.

Although the development of the contingency restructuring plan was implemented one year later than planned in the November 2006 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 school 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 and parents (by choice of entry into the intervention) to begin in 2009-2010.

This plan was based in part on the work of Mass Insight Education and the concept of a turnaround zone. The committee agreed that the plan should include an outside partner to develop and implement a comprehensive “school within a school” model for middle grade students. The committee presented this plan at the June 18, 2008, meeting of the Virginia Board of Education, School and Division Accountability Committee. This plan met the following conditions agreed upon by the VBOE and Petersburg City 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.

At that time, federal school improvement funds that were allocated only to local education agencies (LEAs) with schools in improvement were available to cover the start-up costs for program development and implementation planning. On November 20, 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 and authorized the VDOE to assist Petersburg City Public Schools in such planning by providing available federal resources. On April 30, 2009, Petersburg City Public Schools reported to the VBOE that a turnaround partner could not be secured. The VBOE requested that a vendor be selected no later than August 15, 2009, with implementation for students occurring no later than January 2010. However, after considering the difficulty that Petersburg City Public Schools had experienced in securing a Lead Turnaround Partner (LTP), on October 29, 2009, VDOE began the procurement process to request proposals from qualified sources to serve as LTPs on an as needed, when needed basis, to develop and implement academic programs for one or more of the core discipline areas of mathematics, science, social studies and language arts for students in persistently low-achieving public schools. Persistently low-achieving schools for the purpose of this procurement were those schools that were denied accreditation and/or were in restructuring as sanctioned by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*.

Summary of Major Elements

On April 1, 2010, the VDOE made multiple contract awards from which applicable divisions, a group of schools or individual schools within a region can select an LTP. On April 7, 2010, VDOE introduced the four selected vendors for the Lead Turnaround Partner contract list to divisions with schools identified as persistently low-achieving. Petersburg City Public Schools attended this technical assistance activity. At this time, funding for the Lead Turnaround Partner was discussed.

Petersburg City Public Schools has two schools currently identified as persistently low-achieving as required by the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) – Phase II requirements: Peabody Middle School (Tier I) and Petersburg High School (Tier II. B.). For the purposes of federal funding available under 1003(g) of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, a persistently lowest-achieving school is defined as:

- A. A Title I school in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that is among the lowest-achieving five percent of Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring based on the academic achievement of the “all students” group in reading/language arts and mathematics combined and the school has not reduced its failure rate in reading/language arts and/or mathematics by 10 to 15 percent each year for the past two years (Tier I); or
- B. A secondary school that is eligible for, but does not receive, Title I funds that is among the lowest-achieving five percent of schools based on the academic achievement of the “all students” group in reading/language arts and mathematics combined and the school has not reduced its failure rate in reading/language arts and/or mathematics by 10 to 15 percent each year for the past two years (Tier II. A.); or
- C. A high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent for two years (Tier II. B.)

As required by the SFSF – Phase II requirements, the following factors were considered to identify the persistently lowest-achieving schools: 1) the academic achievement of the “all students” group in reading/language arts and mathematics combined; and 2) the schools’ lack of progress on those assessments over a number of years in the “all students” group.

In order to receive 1003(g) funding under NCLB to serve Tier III schools (other schools in improvement including A. P. Hill Elementary, J. E. B. Stuart Elementary, and Vernon Johns Junior High School), Petersburg City Public Schools must agree to serve its Tier I school, Peabody Middle School. Also, for this funding, Peabody Middle School is required to implement one of four approved USED models: closure, restart, turnaround, or transformation.

USED does not require Petersburg City Public Schools to serve Petersburg High School, the Tier II. B. school. As indicated by a review of Petersburg’s data, Grades 6-9 are major areas of concern with regard to student achievement, and as a result of a grade configuration changes that occurred in 2008-2009, grade 9 students are no longer served at Petersburg High school. Instead Petersburg High School now serves students in grades 10-12; Vernon Johns Junior High serves students in grade 8 and 9 and Peabody Middle School serves students in grades 6 and 7. The impact of the challenges to the middle grades on the high school is demonstrated in the NCLB graduation rate change at Petersburg High School falling from 56 percent in 2007-2008 to 53 percent in 2008-2009. For this reason, Petersburg City Public Schools has asked for permission to serve Peabody Middle School and Vernon Johns High School with 1003(g) funding using the transformation model at both schools. Although the transformation model is not required at a Tier III school, this would allow a Lead Turnaround Partner to support the operation of multiple smaller learning communities. These would be housed in both Peabody Middle School and Vernon Johns High School. Hopefully, this kind of commitment to increase student achievement will better prepare students to graduate from high school on time. Under the requirements of USED for 1003(g) funding, this is allowable.

However, because of the impact of a grade configuration change that occurred several years ago, Petersburg City Public Schools asked VDOE for authorization to serve its middle grades, 8-9, by providing funding to both Peabody Middle School (Tier I) and Vernon Johns Middle School (Year 7 of

NCLB). In this consolidation, Petersburg High School was changed from a grade configuration of 9-12 to 10-12. Peabody Middle school was changed from a grade configuration of 6-8 to grades 6-7. Vernon Johns High School was changed from a grade configuration of 6-8 to 8-9. The process for selecting a LTP is summarized in Attachment A. The committee that provided the Petersburg School Board with a recommendation on April 26, 2010, included parents, teachers, and administrators. At that meeting, the Petersburg School board approved the committee's recommendation of Cambridge Education as a LTP.

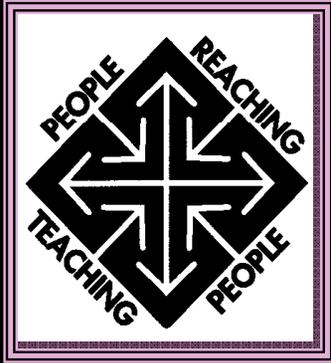
The Petersburg City Public Schools will be completing an application for 1003(g) funds due in June 2010. Petersburg City Public Schools has asked for funding in the amount of \$1.7 million for Peabody Middle School and \$1.3 million for Vernon Johns High School over the next three years. This funding will be approved if Petersburg City Public Schools completes a grant application and continues to meet the requirements for funding as required by USED.

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education accept the report for Petersburg City Public Schools.

Impact on Resources: None

Timetable for Further Review/Action: None



Petersburg City Public Schools

Recommendation of the Lead Turnaround Partner (LTP)

Presentation to PCPS Board of Education
Dr. James Victory, Superintendent
Dr. Alvera J. Parrish
Assistant Superintendent of Instruction
April 26, 2010
6:00 p.m.

The Process

- Selection of the USED Transformation Model was approved by PCPS Board of Education to be used at Peabody Middle School.
- All schools in Tier III (Vernon Johns Jr. High, J. E. B. Stuart Elementary School, and A. P. Hill Elementary Schools) will implement the State, VDOE, Transformation Model.
- An interview schedule was developed.

The Process - Continued

- Selection of committee members to interview perspective vendors
- Debrief with the interview committee on the information provided by vendors through the RFP proposals and reviewed the selection process

The Interview Process - April 22, 2010

- Four vendors were interviewed:
 - Pearson Education
 - Johns Hopkins University
 - Cambridge Education
 - Edison Learning
- Each vendor was allotted one hour to respond to questions and extra time was provided to allow the opportunity to share additional information.

The Interview Process - Continued

April 22, 2010

- The committee scored each vendor individually using an Interview Questionnaire rubric.
- Scores given by each committee member were compiled and recorded using a Scoring Tally Form.
- The committee engaged in deeper discussion as they reflected on written proposals submitted by each vendor to move toward consensus.

The Interview Process - Continued

April 22, 2010

- The LTP Selection Committee made the decision to meet Friday, April 23, 2010, to move into Phase II of the process, which was consensus building.
- The Selection Committee came to consensus using the Consensus Tally Form, after careful review of the information and interviews with each vendor.

Recommendation

- The Selection Committee reached a decision on Friday, April 23, 2010.
- The recommendation of the Selection Committee is for



Cambridge Education

to be the Lead Turnaround Partner, that will partner with Petersburg City Public Schools.

Next Steps...

- Submit the LTP Form to VDOE informing them of the selected model by PCPS.
- Submit the recommended LTP to the PCPS Board of Education.
- Upon approval by the Board, we will inform the VDOE of the selected LTP.
- Upon agreement of services to be rendered, and development of the scope of work, we will proceed with the development of the memorandum of understanding.
- Complete the 1003(g) grant application for 3 years of funding.

LTP Selection Committee Members

1. Dr. James M. Victory, Superintendent
2. Dr. Alvera J. Parrish, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction
3. Dr. Dorothea Shannon, Chief Academic Officer (VDOE)
4. Dr. Brenda M. Petteway, Director of Secondary Instruction
5. Ms. Gwen Price, Director of Testing
6. Mrs. Cheryl Bostic, Supervisor of Federal Programs
7. Mrs. Tonya Brown-Fletcher, Principal, Vernon Johns Jr. High
8. Ms. Barbara Moore, Parent & PTA Vice President at VJJH
9. Ms. Heather Lamb, Assistant Principal, Peabody M.S.
10. Ms. Lorraine Davis, Instructional Specialist, Peabody M. S.
11. Mrs. Annette Ampy, Parent, Peabody M. S.
12. Mr. John Hart, President of the City-wide PTA

QUESTIONS??