

Board of Education Agenda Item

Item: _____ H. _____

Date: _____ July 28, 2011 _____

Topic: Final Review of a Modified Academic Review Process for High 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 June 28, 2011

action Accepted for first review the modified academic review process for high schools

Background Information: In February 2009, the Board of Education revised *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* to require high schools to meet an annual benchmark for graduation beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, and to create a graduation and completion index for high schools (8 VAC 20-131-280). The graduation and completion index includes weighted points for diploma graduates (100 points), GED recipients (75 points), students not graduating but still in school (70 points), and students earning certificates of program completion (25 points). Schools with a twelfth grade must meet a benchmark of 85 points for a rating of fully accredited. A school may be *Accredited with Warning* in specific academic areas and/or in achievement of the minimum threshold for the graduation and completion index. Until the 2015-2016 school year, a school will be designated *Provisionally Accredited–Graduation Rate* if its eligible students meet Virginia’s Standards of Learning pass rates but the school fails to achieve a minimum of 85 points on the graduation and completion index while meeting a lower benchmark (8VAC 20-131-300). For a school to be rated *Provisionally Accredited–Graduation Rate* in school years 2011- 2015, the required graduation and completion index will increase by one point each year with a range of 80-84

points.

Further, each school that is *Accredited with Warning* (in specific academic areas and/or in achievement of the minimum threshold for the graduation and completion index) or *Provisionally Accredited–Graduation Rate* must undergo an academic review process and must develop a three-year School Improvement Plan (8VAC 20-131-310).

The proposed modified academic review process may be used as an alternative to the process approved by the Board in 2005, *School-Level Academic Review Process* (Attachment B).

Summary of Major Elements: The Department of Education is required to develop academic review guidelines to support schools that are *Accredited with Warning* (in specific academic areas and/or in achievement of the minimum threshold for the graduation and completion index) or *Provisionally Accredited–Graduation Rate* (8VAC 20-131-310). Guidelines are proposed that establish a modified process designed to address graduation and academic issues as well as the required elements of three-year school improvement plans for high schools that are *Accredited with Warning* (in specific academic areas and/or in achievement of the minimum threshold for the graduation and completion index) or *Provisionally Accredited–Graduation Rate*.

In order to address the needs of these schools, the Department of Education proposes the modified academic review process as outlined in Attachment A. The Office of School Improvement, the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals, the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center, the Center on Innovation and Improvement, and the National High School Center have collaboratively developed this proposed process over the past three years.

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education approve the proposed modifications to the school-level academic review process guidelines for high schools *Accredited with Warning* (in specific academic areas and/or in achievement of the minimum threshold for the graduation and completion index) or *Provisionally Accredited–Graduation Rate*.

Impact on Resources:

The General Assembly appropriates funds to conduct the academic reviews. These funds will be used to conduct the proposed school-level academic reviews.

Timetable for Further Review/Action:

Upon board approval, the attached guidelines for the school-level academic review process will be implemented for the 2011-2012 school year.

**Proposed Modified Academic Review Process for High Schools
Accredited with Warning (in specific academic areas and/or in achievement of the minimum
threshold for the graduation and completion index) or
*Provisionally Accredited–Graduation Rate***

**Part I: Modified Academic Review Process for High Schools Rated *Accredited with
Warning* (in specific academic areas and/or in achievement of the minimum threshold
for the graduation and completion index) or *Provisionally Accredited–Graduation Rate***

A. Introduction

The Board of Education approved the *School-Level Academic Review Process* in September 2005. (Attachment B). Guidelines are proposed that establish a modified process to the School-Level Academic Review Process that address graduation and academic issues as well as the required elements of three-year school improvement plans for high schools that are *Accredited with Warning* (in specific academic areas and/or in achievement of the minimum threshold for the graduation and completion index) or *Provisionally Accredited–Graduation Rate*. In order to customize the current School-Level Academic Review Process, the proposed modified process may be used for high schools that are *Accredited with Warning* (in specific academic areas and/or in achievement of the minimum threshold for the graduation and completion index) or *Provisionally Accredited–Graduation Rate* (8VAC 20-131-310).

B. Data Driven Strategy Development–Virginia’s Early Warning System (VEWS)

Early Warning Systems are data tracking tools designed to assist schools in identifying which students show signs that they are at-risk of failure or drop out. Identified students are provided with interventions to get them back on-track for graduation, and are monitored throughout the school year. Early Warning Systems are intended to assist schools as they work towards improved outcomes for students and increased graduation rates.

The Virginia Early Warning System (VEWS) was developed for the Department of Education in collaboration with the National High School Center. The VEWS indicators are based upon predictors of drop out and graduation that have been validated by national research and by four Virginia school divisions that participated in a pilot program. The use of VEWS is required for high schools that are *Accredited with Warning* (in specific academic areas and/or in achievement of the minimum threshold for the graduation and completion index) or *Provisionally Accredited–Graduation Rate*. The VEWS data will provide quarterly reports to the school team to track progress on selected indicators. These indicators include attendance, grades, credits earned, scores on SOL assessments, and behavior.

A regional liaison that is assigned by the Department of Education and division team will review the VEWS data as well as other available data. This data may include identifying the number of over-age students at each grade, reviewing PALS data in grades K-3, identifying the percent of students not reading on grade-level at third grade over the past three years, and other significant data the division may find relevant to strategies needed to prevent students from entering high school at risk of not graduating on time or at all.

C. Regional Liaisons and Other Technical Assistance

Regional liaisons will be assigned to each school by the Department of Education, Office of School Improvement. The liaisons will identify the needs of each school *Accredited with Warning* (in specific academic areas and/or in achievement of the minimum threshold for the graduation and completion index) or *Provisionally Accredited–Graduation Rate* by reviewing the same data as the division and school team. The regional liaison, in collaboration with the school and division team, will customize a framework for improvement developed by either the National High School Center and/or the Center on Innovation and Improvement. These tools are described in Part II. B. of this attachment.

Although training will be conducted regionally, technical assistance will be provided to each school as needed and determined by the regional liaison. Guided by the systematic review of the VEWS data and the division's and school's self-assessment report (from the National High School Center and/or the Center on Innovation and Improvement discussed in Part II. B. of this attachment), the regional liaison will identify and will communicate to the Office of School Improvement the priority needs for technical assistance for each school and division. All technical assistance needs will be considered and addressed within the budget appropriated for the academic review process. Regional training serves two purposes: first, the cost of training is greatly reduced; and second, schools with similar needs and demographics can learn from each other.

Web conferences developed by the regional liaisons, a select group of principals, and other educational leaders, will be provided throughout the year. The web conferences will meet the needs of Virginia's schools that have low graduation rates and/or low academic achievement and will be aligned with the research-based strategies available from the National High School Center and the Center on Innovation and Improvement.

D. Division- and School-Level Teams

As part of the academic review process, two teams will be established. The division team will include the principal of the school rated *Accredited with Warning* (in specific academic areas and/or in achievement of the minimum threshold for the graduation and completion index) or *Provisionally Accredited–Graduation Rate*, the division's top elementary, middle and secondary leaders, and membership from Title I and special education. The division team will review data from the VEWS to make decisions about resources, policies, and strategies that will impact high school achievement (academic and graduation) at all grade levels.

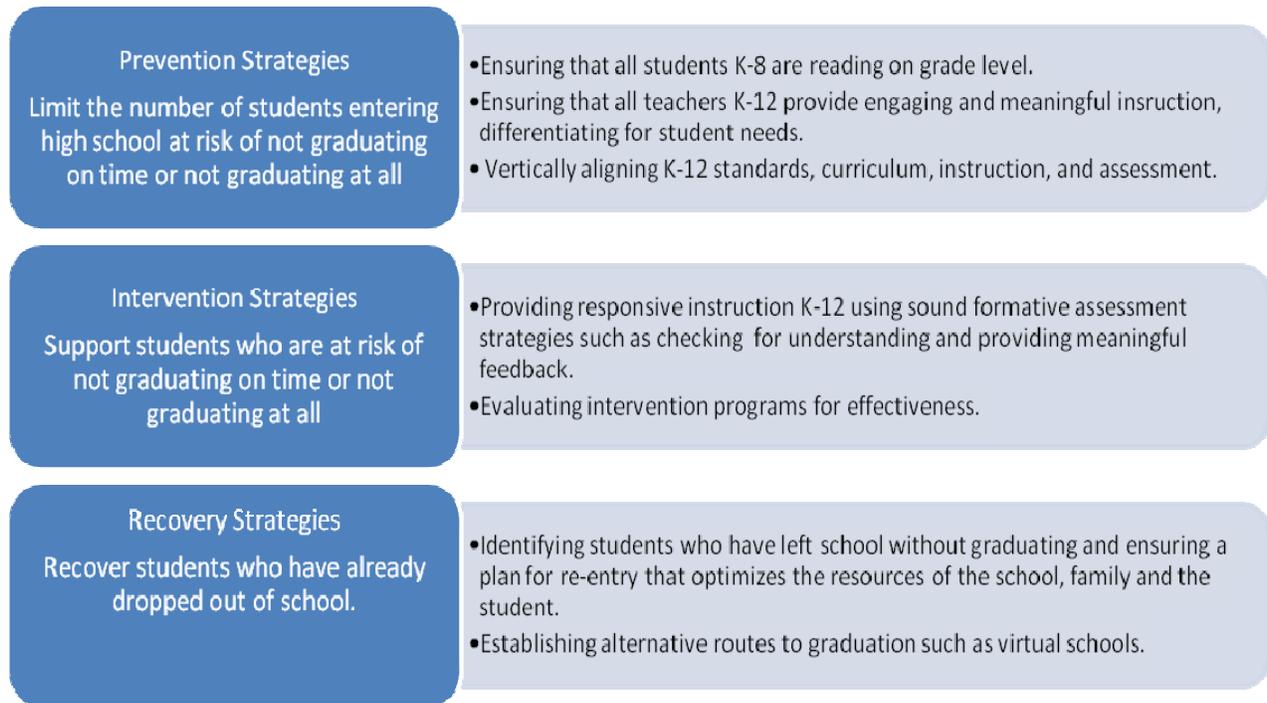
The school team will include the school's principal and membership from guidance, special education and instruction. At least one member (other than the principal) of the division team will serve on the school team as well, preferably the division's top instructional leader. The school team will execute the 7-step VEWS implementation process in order to identify and intervene with students at-risk of failure or drop out. The VEWS process is outlined below in Part II. A. of this attachment.

The Office of School Improvement will provide technical assistance to both the division and school team as described in Part II of this attachment.

The Office of School Improvement, the National High School Center, the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center, the Center on Innovation and Improvement, and the Virginia Association of

Secondary School Principals have collaborated to develop a framework of technical assistance that provides intensive systems of support for the division and the school. Recovery and intervention strategies need to be considered for students who have entered high school at-risk for failure and drop out. Prevention strategies need to be considered for students in grades K-8 to ensure that all students are prepared to be successful in high school.

Figure 1. Strategies Considered by Schools and Divisions as Part of the Academic Review Process



Part II: Tools Developed for the Academic Review Process for High Schools Rated *Accredited with Warning* (in specific academic areas and/or in achievement of the minimum threshold for the graduation and completion index) or *Provisionally Accredited–Graduation Rate*

A. 7-Step VEWS Implementation Process

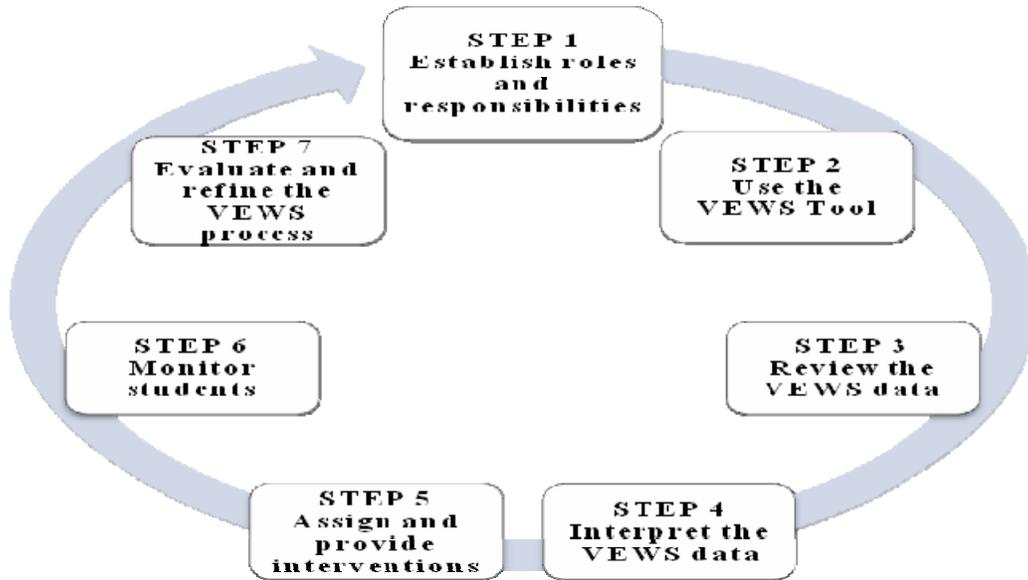
In order to comprehensively address the barriers to student success that lead to drop out, a strategic process of data-driven decision making that includes systematic student identification, intervention, monitoring, and evaluation must be implemented. The 7-Step VEWS implementation process, developed by the National High School Center, will be executed over the course of the year in alignment with the academic calendar.

Specific steps are undertaken during defined periods of the year, many in a recurring or continuous manner, so that the process of reviewing VEWS data and identifying appropriate dropout strategies and interventions is timely and responsive to individual student needs. In the longer term, the process allows ongoing evaluation and revision across academic years to ensure that the VEWS achieves maximum efficiency and efficacy in the local context. The process is defined below:

Step 1: Establish Roles and Responsibilities

A diverse, well-informed school team is essential to the success of this process. The team should include a broad representation of staff within the school and, ideally, the division. Membership may include the school principal or assistant principal, representatives from feeder middle and elementary schools, guidance counselors, teachers, and division central office representatives. The school team will meet regularly throughout the school year.

Figure 2. 7-Step VEWS Implementation Process Developed by the National High School Center



Step 2: Use the VEWS Tool

The VEWS tool uses information about student attendance, course failures, grade point average (GPA), and credits earned to identify, or flag, students who are at-risk for dropping out. The tool is designed to primarily monitor students while they are in high school; however, a pre-high school risk indicator has also been integrated into the tool. Once data are imported into the tool using an Excel file format, the tool automatically flags students as “at-risk” on the basis of the indicators that are predictive of whether students will graduate or drop out. The school team ensures that the tool is regularly updated and that VEWS information is disseminated appropriately to maintain confidentiality while facilitating the decision making process. The VEWS tool is available at

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/early_warning_system/index.shtml.

Step 3: Review the VEWS Data

In Step 3, VEWS data are reviewed to identify students at risk for dropping out and to understand patterns in student engagement and academic performance. This is a critical step when using any type of early warning data, although the focus here is on information and reports that are in the VEWS tool. A wide variety of reports are available to disaggregate data into manageable pieces that can be sorted, organized, and prioritized so that the school team can take action. The VEWS tool provides student- and school-level reports that the team can then review to better understand patterns and begin to consider the allocation of dropout prevention resources to flagged students. These reports allow the team to review

summary information on the number and percentage of students in the school who are flagged (for any reason) and who are flagged for particular indicators.

Step 4: Interpret the VEWS Data

This step builds on the review of VEWS data conducted in Step 3 by encouraging the team to look more closely at the characteristics of flagged students. Indicators of risk are merely signs of deeper and likely more complex problems related to student disengagement with school and academic failure. The team should gather data from a variety of sources. These sources may include classroom teachers or other adults in the school who interact with flagged students. Additionally, the team should consider conducting one-on-one meetings with individual students, their parents, or both. On the basis of their investigations, the team should be able to identify some common and individual needs among students, and prepare to identify and implement appropriate intervention strategies (Step 5) and monitor students' responses to these interventions (Step 6).

Step 5: Assign and Provide Interventions

During Step 5, the school team matches individual students to specific interventions after having gathered information about: (1) potential root causes for individual flagged students, and (2) the available dropout prevention and academic and behavioral support programs in the school, division, and community. A tiered approach to intervention, in which increasingly intensive levels of intervention are provided to the students with the greatest needs, is recommended. The VEWS tool allows schools to identify and prescribe multiple levels of intervention for flagged students. Interventions are then assigned by tier, date, and person responsible.

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Step 6: Monitor Students

In this step, the school team uses progress monitoring information to evaluate the impact of interventions on individual students and on students with common needs. Students who were previously flagged and assigned to one or more interventions should be monitored closely to determine whether they are again flagged and for which reasons. Issues that arise with students who are receiving supports and who continue to show signs that they are at risk for dropping out should be addressed. New interventions that are not currently available to meet the needs of students may be identified. In these cases, the team must conduct a search and develop a list of potential interventions and strategies that may serve the need, with the associated costs of implementing the intervention or strategy (e.g., resources, funding, staff time). After the team shares the level of need and potential solutions and shares the information with leadership and staff, appropriate intervention(s) can be implemented. Families should be informed when students appear to make improvements, and they should also be informed when there is lack of improvement or further decline.

Step 7: Evaluate and Refine the VEWS Process

On an annual basis (at a minimum), the school team should reflect on the VEWS implementation process. In this step, the team reflects on the VEWS process based upon data and evidence and identifies successes and challenges. As part of this step, the team makes recommendations for improving the process. Finally, the current school team, in addition to other school and division leadership, identifies new school team members and ensures that they are trained and that they understand the implementation process. Step 7 also includes an analysis of the VEWS risk indicators to determine the extent to which they

are accurately predicting students who are at-risk of dropping out of high school. Having multiple years of data to look at these percentages is critical to testing the predictive power of the VEWS indicators for the local context. If the validation analysis shows that the system is not very predictive in the local context, modification of the indicators or the thresholds/benchmarks may be warranted.

B. Needs Assessment and Framework for Improvement

Throughout the course of the first year, the division and school team will use the VEWS data and other data to complete an in-depth and thorough needs assessment using tools developed by the Center on Innovation and Improvement or the National High School Center. These tools can be customized by the regional liaison to meet the needs of each school. The selection of the appropriate tool will be decided by the regional liaison, in collaboration with the division and school team, based on the review of VEWS and other data. The division and school team will use selected indicators to develop a single comprehensive plan that includes division and school strategies. The division strategies will focus on K-12 needs, while the school strategies will focus on what is needed for student success at the high school.

High School Rapid Improvement Indicators from the Center on Innovation and Improvement

The Center on Innovation and Improvement has developed a set of targeted indicators focused on the school’s current practices that are critical to the rapid improvement of the graduation rate and academic achievement at the school-level. The division indicators provide a framework for the division strategies that support the school in its improvement plan.

Table 1

High School Rapid Improvement Indicators from the Center on Innovation and Improvement

Element	Indicators of Effectiveness
Team Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The division and school teams regularly examine individual and collective student data (e.g., course grades and completion, overall grade point average, attendance rates, behavior referrals, suspensions, end-of-course exams, state exam results) to identify areas for improvement across all content areas and throughout the school. ▪ The division and school teams monitor rates of student transfer, dropout, graduation, and post-high school outcome (e.g., student enrollment in college, students in careers) using a longitudinal data system. ▪ The division and school teams implement, monitor, and analyze results from an early warning system at the school level using indicators (e.g., attendance, academic, behavior monitoring) to identify students at risk for dropping out of high school. • A team structure is officially incorporated into the school improvement plan and school governance policy. • All teams have written statements of purpose and bylaws for their operation. • All teams operate with work plans for the year and specific work products to produce. • All teams prepare agendas for their meetings.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All teams maintain official minutes of their meetings. • The principal maintains a file of the agendas, work products, and minutes of all teams. • The division and school teams meet regularly (twice a month or more for an hour each meeting). • The division and school team serve as a conduit of communication to the faculty and staff. • The division and school teams regularly look at school performance data and aggregated classroom observation data and use that data to make decisions about school improvement and professional development needs. • Teachers are organized into grade-level, grade-level cluster, or subject-area instructional teams. • Instructional teams meet for blocks of time (4 to 6 hour blocks, once a month; whole days before and after the school year) sufficient to develop and refine units of instruction and review student learning.
<p>Principal's Role</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The traditional roles of the principal and other administrators (e.g., management, discipline, security) are distributed to allow adequate time for administrative attention to instruction and student supports. • The principal keeps a focus on instructional improvement and student learning outcomes. • The principal monitors curriculum and classroom instruction regularly. • The principal spends at least 50 percent of his/her time working directly with teachers to improve instruction, including classroom observations. • The principal challenges, supports and monitors the correction of unsound teaching practices. • The principal compiles reports from classroom observations, showing aggregate areas of strength and areas that need improvement without revealing the identity of individual teachers. • The division and school teams review the principal's summary reports of classroom observations and take them into account in planning professional development. • Professional development for teachers includes observations by the principal related to indicators of effective teaching and classroom management. • Professional development for teachers includes observations by peers related to indicators of effective teaching and classroom management. • Professional development for teachers includes self-assessment related to indicators of effective teaching and classroom management. • Teachers are required to make individual professional development plans based on classroom observations.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development of individual teachers includes an emphasis on indicators of effective teaching. • Professional development for the whole faculty includes assessment of strengths and areas in need of improvement from classroom observations of indicators of effective teaching. • The principal plans opportunities for teachers to share their strengths with other teachers.
<p>Opportunity to Learn: Content Mastery and Graduation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school confirms that a student has mastered prerequisite content knowledge before allowing the student to take higher-level courses. ▪ All students demonstrating prerequisite content mastery are given access to higher-level courses. ▪ The curriculum and schedule provide pathways for all students to acquire missing content knowledge. ▪ The school provides all students with academic supports (e.g., tutoring, co-curricular activities, tiered interventions) to keep them on-track for graduation. ▪ The school provides all students extended learning opportunities (e.g., summer bridge programs, after-school and supplemental educational services, Saturday academies, enrichment programs) to keep them on-track for graduation. ▪ The school provides all students with opportunities for content and credit recovery that are integrated into the regular school day to keep them on-track for graduation. ▪ Teachers individualize instruction based on pre-test results to provide support for some students and enhanced learning opportunities for others. ▪ Teachers re-teach based on post-test results. ▪ All teachers differentiate assignments (individualize instruction) in response to individual student performance on pre-tests and other methods of assessment. ▪ All teachers test frequently using a variety of evaluation methods and maintain a record of the results. ▪ All teachers develop weekly lesson plans based on aligned units of instruction.
<p>Opportunity to Learn: Extended Learning Opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school expects all students to participate in activities to develop skills outside of the classroom (e.g., service learning, athletics, enrichment, internships). ▪ The school provides all students with opportunities to learn through nontraditional educational settings (e.g., virtual courses, dual enrollment, service learning, work-based internships). ▪ The school provides all students with formal supports and a network of contacts with school personnel, community members, and workplace personnel to ensure the social capital necessary to make informed life decisions.
<p>Opportunity to Learn: Transitions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school provides freshman students with formal supports as they make the transition to high school (e.g., summer bridge programs, freshman academies). ▪ The school provides senior students with formal supports as they

	<p>make the transition out of high school (e.g., college and career planning, job fairs).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school tracks the postsecondary school placements and experiences of their graduates and reports the results to the school board, faculty, and school community.
<p>Opportunity to Learn: Post-Secondary School Options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guidance counselors provide all students with assessment feedback and reports to facilitate student-driven decisions about their own work and college and career goals. ▪ The school provides all students with opportunities to enroll in and master rigorous coursework for college and career readiness. ▪ The school provides all students with academic supports (e.g., supplemental interventions) when needed to enable them to succeed in rigorous courses designed for college and career readiness. ▪ The school provides all students with supports and guidance to prepare them for college and careers (e.g., career awareness activities, career exploration, college visits, advising). ▪ All teachers integrate college and career guidance and supports relevant to their subject areas into their taught curricula. ▪ The school routinely provides all students with information and experience in a variety of career pathways. ▪ The school provides all students with access to relevant data to make decisions about their course of study as they progress toward their college and career goals. ▪ The school provides all students with information, guidance, and support to secure financial assistance and scholarships for college or other postsecondary education.
<p>Division Indicators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The division makes reference to guidance from <i>What Works Clearinghouse</i> (an online data-base housing scientific evidence of best practices in education) regarding how to assess what the best restructuring options are given its unique division and school context. ▪ The division provides collaboration between high schools and their respective feeder schools prior to a cohort’s freshman year. ▪ The superintendent and other central office staff are accountable for school improvement and student learning outcomes. ▪ The school board and superintendent present a unified vision for school improvement. ▪ The division works with the school to provide early and intensive intervention for students not making progress. ▪ The division examines existing school improvement strategies being implemented across the division and determines their value, expanding, modifying, and culling as evidence suggests. ▪ The division provides the technology, training, and support to facilitate the school’s data management needs. ▪ The division provides a cohesive division curriculum guide aligned with state standards or otherwise places curricular expectation on the school. ▪ The division is prepared for setbacks, resistance, and obstacles

	<p>on the path to substantial improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Professional development is built into the school schedule by the division, but the school is allowed discretion in selecting training and consultation that fit the requirements of its improvement/restructuring plan and its evolving needs. ▪ Division policies and procedures clarify the scope of site-based decision making granted a school and are summarized in a letter of understanding. ▪ The division regularly reallocates resources to support school, staff, and instructional improvement. ▪ The division designates a central office contact person for the school, and that person maintains close communication with the school and an interest in its progress. ▪ The division operates with division-level and school-level improvement teams. ▪ Division and school decision makers meet at least twice a month to discuss the school’s progress and require the school to report and document its progress monthly to the superintendent, and the superintendent reports the school’s progress to the school board. ▪ The division includes community organizations in division and school improvement planning and maintains regular communication with them. ▪ The division ensures that the change agent (typically the principal) is skilled in motivating staff and the community, communicating clear expectations, and focusing on improved student learning. ▪ The division includes parental organizations and municipal and civic leaders in the division and school improvement planning and maintains regular communication with them. ▪ All teams have written statements of purpose and by-laws for their operation.
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The Eight Elements of High School Improvement from the National High School Center

The National High School Center has developed a research-supported comprehensive framework that consists of eight core elements to inform and guide school improvement efforts at both the division and school level. Below are sample critical indicators of effectiveness that will be examined by the division and school team throughout the year. The entire document is available at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/early_warning_system/index.shtml.

Table 2
The Eight Elements of High School Improvement from the National High School Center

Element	Sample Indicators of Effectiveness
Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rigorous content and instruction are aligned to local, state, and national standards. ▪ Research- and evidence-based instructional strategies are incorporated across all content areas for all students. ▪ College and career readiness skills are incorporated across all

	content areas.
Assessment and Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multiple assessment strategies, including formative assessment, are implemented across all content areas. ▪ Instructional staff members regularly analyze assessment data of instructional planning. ▪ An early warning system is used to identify students at risk for failure and dropping out; identified students are provided appropriate interventions.
Teacher Quality and Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teachers have the necessary content and pedagogical knowledge, as well as prerequisite training and pre-service experiences. ▪ Instructional staff members work collaboratively to meet student needs across all content areas and in all categorical programs. ▪ Professional development is job-embedded, ongoing throughout each school year, and aligned with school and division improvement initiatives.
Student and Family Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Programs that engage and support family members are provided. ▪ Transition programs are in place that support students as they transition in and out of high school. ▪ A positive school climate which includes school safety and respect is fostered.
Stakeholder Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multiple stakeholders are engaged in high school improvement strategies and initiatives. ▪ Partnerships with stakeholders are fostered to enhance teaching and learning opportunities. ▪ Multiple communication strategies are implemented.
Leadership and Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A distributed leadership approach is in place to promote high school improvement. ▪ High school improvement strategies and initiatives are guided by an effective high school improvement team. ▪ School leaders possess the prerequisite knowledge of school change to support high school initiatives and improvement strategies.
Organization and Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organizational structures that foster collaboration among instructional staff are in place. ▪ Schoolwide structures that support effective classroom management across all content areas are implemented. ▪ Organizational structures to support innovative instruction and opportunities to learn through nontraditional settings are in place.
Resources for Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appropriate time and necessary fiscal support are provided so that high school improvement strategies and initiatives can be implemented and sustained. ▪ Facilities and materials are continually assessed and upgraded to keep pace with evolving standards and technology. ▪ Teachers and principals continuously develop their knowledge and skills to incorporate high school improvement strategies and initiatives within their instructional leadership practices.

C. Electronic Comprehensive Improvement Planning Tool

The Center on Innovation and Improvement, the National High School Center, and the Office of School Improvement have collaboratively developed an electronic comprehensive improvement planning tool. This tool will be used by the division and school team to develop, implement and monitor a comprehensive three-year improvement plan using either the targeted indicators from the Center on Innovation and Improvement or the broader indicators provided by the National High School Center. Once the team reviews data and develops a comprehensive school improvement plan, the plan will be monitored for three years. In years two and three, the team will continue to meet, discuss data, modify, and implement the school improvement plan. This process meets the requirements of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*, Section 8 VAC 20-131-310 G.:

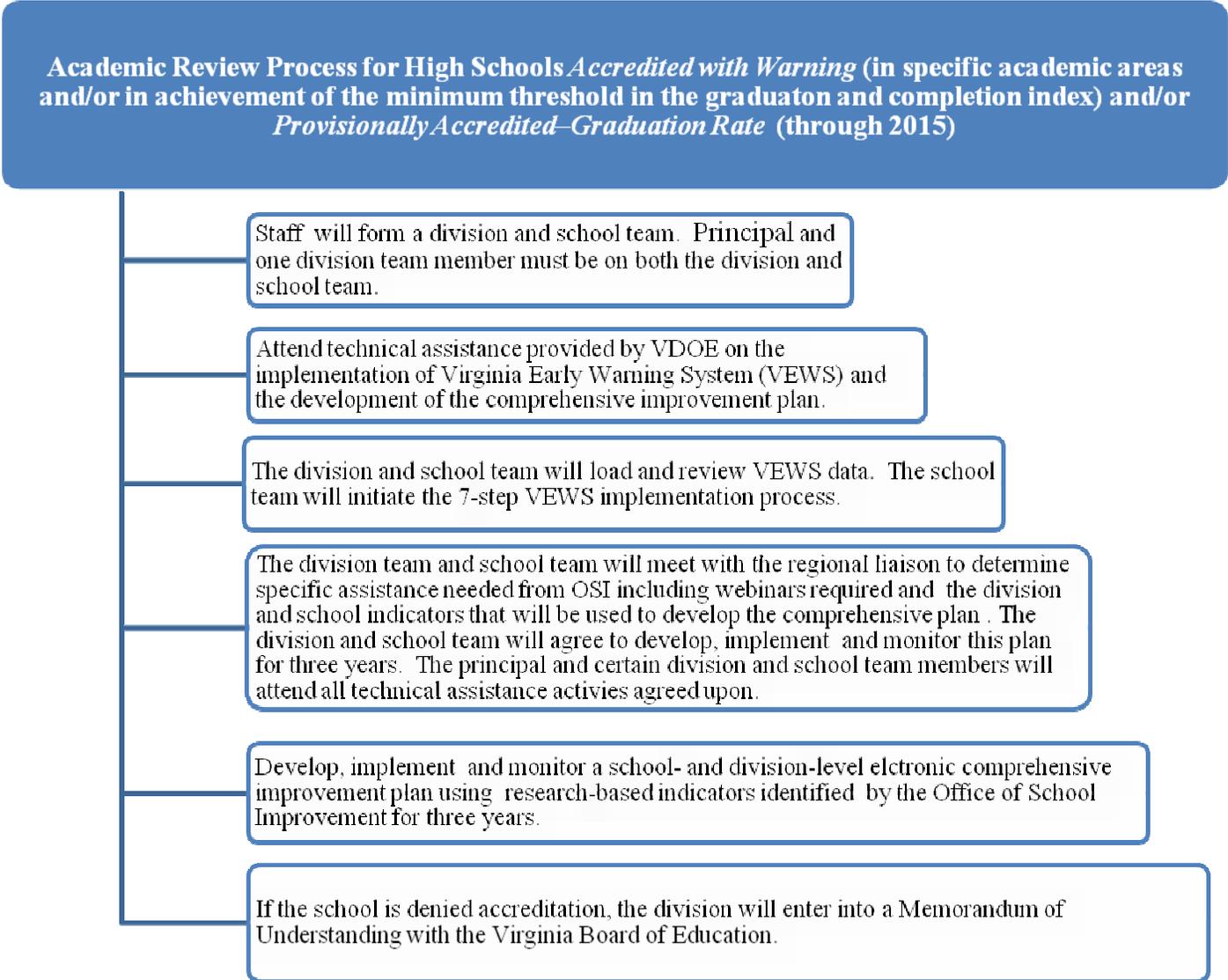
The improvement plan shall include the following:

1. A description of how the school will meet the requirements to be Fully Accredited, for each of the years covered by the plan;
2. Specific measures for achieving and documenting student academic improvement;
3. A description of the amount of time in the school day devoted to instruction in the core academic areas;
4. Instructional practices designed to remediate students who have not been successful on SOL tests;
5. Intervention strategies designed to prevent further declines in student performance and graduation rates;
6. Staff development needed;
7. Strategies to involve and assist parents in raising their child's academic performance;
8. The need for flexibility or waivers to state or local regulations to meet the objectives of the plan; and,
9. A description of the manner in which local, state, and federal funds are used to support the implementation of the components of this plan.

Part III: Summary of the Steps of the Academic Review Process for High Schools Rated *Accredited with Warning* (in specific academic areas and/or in achievement of the minimum threshold for the graduation and completion index) or *Provisionally Accredited–Graduation Rate*

Below is a summary of the steps of the academic review process for high schools rated *Accredited with Warning* (in specific academic areas and/or in achievement of the minimum threshold for the graduation and completion index) or *Provisionally Accredited–Graduation Rate*.

Figure 3: Steps of the Academic Review Process for High Schools *Accredited with Warning* (in specific academic areas and/or in achievement of the minimum threshold for the graduation and completion index) or *Provisionally Accredited–Graduation Rate*



SCHOOL-LEVEL ACADEMIC REVIEW PROCESS GUIDELINES
Approved by the Virginia Board of Education, September 21, 2005

Purpose of the School-level Academic Review

The school-level academic review is designed to help schools identify and analyze instructional and organizational factors affecting student achievement. The focus of the review process is on the systems, processes, and practices that are being implemented at the school and division levels. Specifically, information is gathered that relates to the following areas of review:

- Implementation of curriculum aligned with the Standards of Learning
- Use of time and scheduling practices that maximize instruction
- Use of data to make instructional and planning decisions
- Design of ongoing, school-based program of professional development
- Implementation of a school improvement plan addressing identified areas of weakness
- Implementation of research-based instructional interventions for schools warned in English or mathematics
- Organizational systems and processes
 - Use of school improvement planning process that includes data analysis and input of faculty, parents, and community
 - School culture, including engagement of parents and the community
 - Use of learning environments that foster student achievement
 - Allocation of resources aligned to areas of need

These areas of review provide a framework for the school-level academic review process. Within each of these areas, indicators reflecting effective practices have been identified for review. These areas of review are based on state and federal regulations, and research-based practices found to be effective in improving student achievement. The academic review team collects and analyzes data that demonstrate the school's status in implementing these practices. Based on their findings, the academic review team provides the school and the division with information that can be used to develop or revise, and implement the school's three-year school improvement plan, as required by the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*.

The school-level academic review process is tailored to meet the unique needs and circumstances presented by the school. The first year that a school is rated "accredited with warning" an academic review team conducts a comprehensive review of the areas related to the systems, processes, and practices that are being implemented at the school and division levels as indicated above. Throughout the school's continued status in warning, the academic review process is designed to monitor the implementation of the school improvement plan and provide technical assistance to support the school's improvement efforts.

The division superintendent may request that the school division be allowed to conduct their own academic review process of schools accredited with warning, using their own established processes. Such requests must be sent to the Superintendent of Public Instruction for approval. The request must show that the proposed process and areas of review address the components of the school-level academic review process approved by the Board of Education.

Overview of the Academic Review Process

The school-level academic review is a continuous process. An overview of the process for identifying and supporting schools in the academic review process is described in Chart 1. The focus of the academic review is on the development, monitoring, and implementation of the school improvement plan. Table 1 provides an overview of the implementation steps of the school-level academic review process.

In the first year of warning, the Department of Education assigns the school to one of three academic review “tiers” based on the circumstances of the school. Table 2 describes the tiered approach that is used to assign schools to an academic review process in their first year of warning.

An academic review team, either state or locally directed, will conduct an on-site review and assist the school in identifying areas of need and writing an effective three-year school improvement plan. Concurrent with developing a school improvement plan, priority assistance is prescribed by the academic review team and approved by the Department of Education for immediate delivery.

If the school is not fully accredited in the year following the academic review team visit, the Department of Education will identify a school support team to provide technical assistance to the school and/or division to modify, monitor, and implement the school improvement plan.

Chart 1

ACADEMIC REVIEW: A CONTINUOUS PROCESS

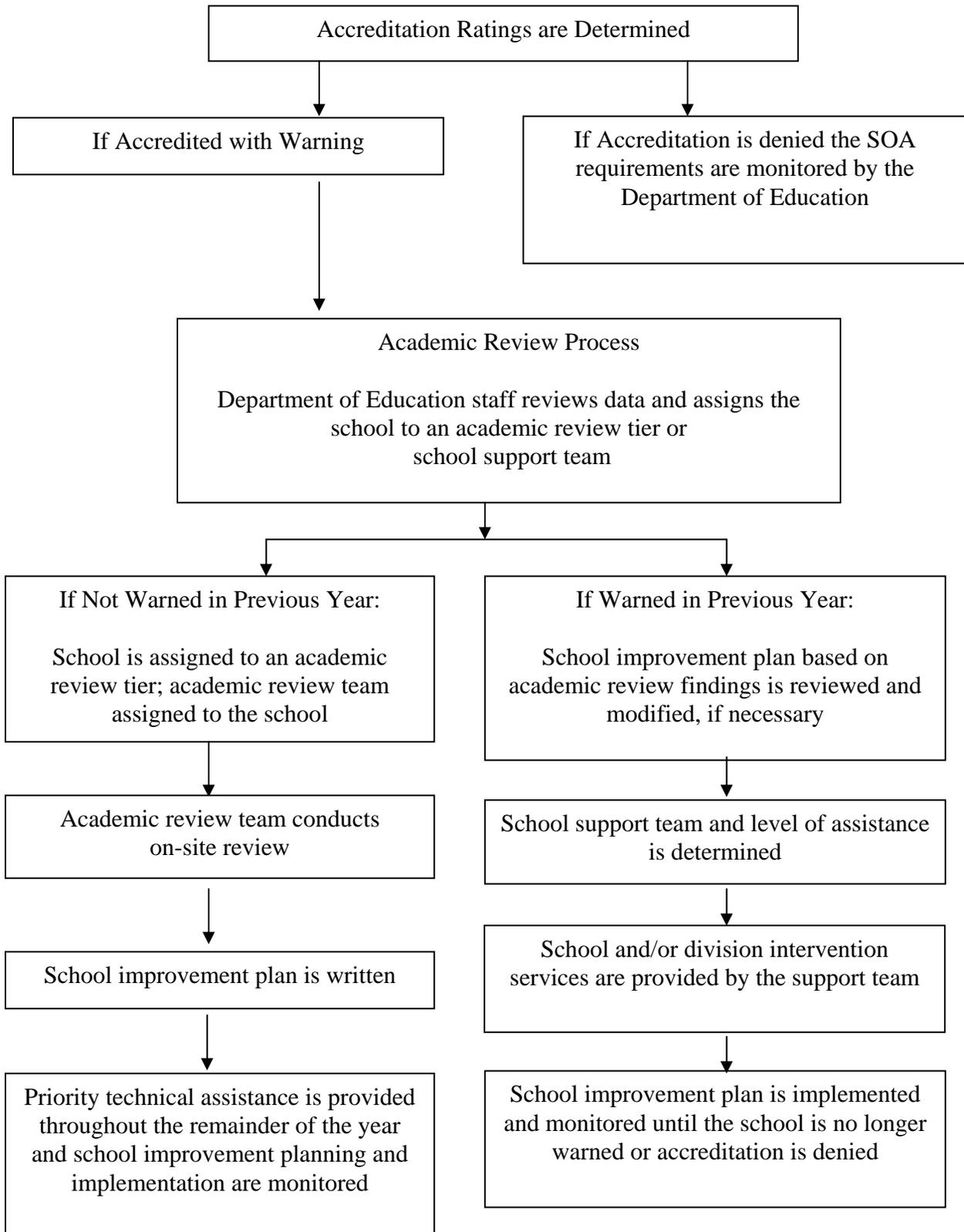


Table 1: Overview of the Academic Review Process

Step One: Review of Accountability Data

The Department of Education reviews accountability data for all schools accredited with warning.

Based on the review of data, if the school was not warned in the previous year, the school is assigned to one of three tiers of review (see Table 2) and the Department of Education identifies the membership of the **academic review team**.

If the school was warned in the previous year, based on the review of data and report of academic review findings, the Department of Education assigns the school to a level of intervention (technical assistance) and identifies the membership of the **school support team**. Step two, the on-site review, will be omitted since it was completed in the prior year.

Step Two: On-Site Review (Omitted if on-site review conducted in prior year)

The **academic review team** completes an on-site review of the school resulting in a draft report of findings that is shared with the principal and superintendent or his/her designee.

The principal and division superintendent will have 15 business days to respond to the Department of Education concerning the draft report of findings. The department will approve the final report of findings and within 15 business days send a copy of the report to the division superintendent and local school board chair.

Step Three: School Improvement Planning

For schools not warned in the previous year, the **academic review team** assists the school in writing an effective school improvement plan based on the team's report of findings. Immediate priority assistance is provided throughout the remainder of the year.

For those schools warned in the previous year, the Department of Education reviews accountability data, identifies the membership of the **school support team**, and assigns the school to a level of technical assistance. The school support team monitors the implementation of the school improvement plan and assists, if necessary, with modifications to the plan.

Step Four: School Support Team

The **school support team** provides focused technical assistance and monitoring of the school improvement plan throughout the year as prescribed by the level of intervention (technical assistance).

Table 2: Tier Assignments for Academic Review Teams

Tier*	Characteristics of Schools	Academic Review Team Members Provided by VDOE	Academic Review Team Members Provided by LEA (certified in process)
Tier I: State Directed	Any school warned in 2 or more content areas OR Title I school warned in English or mathematics that DID NOT meet requirements in the content area(s) to make adequately yearly progress (AYP) under NCLB	Team leader Department of Education staff or contractors assigned to assist in the school in the area(s) of improvement	None
Tier II: Locally Assisted	Title I school warned in English or mathematics that DID meet requirements in the content area(s) to make AYP under NCLB OR Non-Title I school warned in English or mathematics that DID NOT meet requirements in the content area(s) to make AYP under NCLB OR Any school warned in science or history social sciences with a pass rate more than 14 points lower than that required for full accreditation	Team Leader May include Department of Education staff or contractors assigned to assist the school in the area(s) of improvement	Local education agency (LEA) staff assigned to assist the school in the area(s) of improvement
Tier III: Locally Directed	Non-Title I school warned in English or mathematics that DID meet requirements in the content area(s) to make AYP under NCLB OR Any school warned in science or history social sciences with pass rate within 14 points of that required for full accreditation	Team leader	LEA staff assigned to assist the school in the area(s) of improvement

*The Superintendent of Public Instruction may approve other School-level Academic Review tiers or other department initiatives as alternatives to approved review processes dependent upon the special needs and circumstances of the warned school.

Implementation of the Academic Review Process

Academic Review Team

For those schools not warned in the previous year, the **academic review team** completes the on-site review to identify and analyze instructional and organizational factors affecting student achievement. The focus of the review process is on the systems, processes, and practices that are being implemented at the school and division levels. The academic review team consists of Department of Education staff and/or independent contractors trained in the academic review process. The academic review team assists the school in writing the school improvement plan based on the final report of findings. Concurrent with developing a school improvement plan, priority assistance is prescribed by the academic review team and approved by the Department of Education for immediate delivery.

The academic review team conducts an on-site review for those schools not warned in the previous year based on a three-tiered approach. Table 2 describes the three tier assignments of the academic review. Those schools assigned to Tier I remain a priority for the Department of Education for ongoing technical assistance. The department staff and/or independent contractors trained in the academic review process conduct the review and provide needed priority technical assistance following the review. For schools assigned to Tiers II and III, the tiered approach allows local education agency (LEA) staff trained in the school-level academic review process to conduct the academic review with oversight by a Department of Education staff or a contracted educational consultant.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction may approve other academic review tiers or other department initiatives as alternatives to approved review processes dependent upon the special needs and circumstances of the warned school.

School Support Team

For those schools that were warned in the previous year and received an on-site academic review, the school support team reviews the current plan and provides technical assistance to the school to update the school improvement plan based on new accountability data. The school support team consists of Department of Education staff and/or independent contractors trained in developing, implementing, and monitoring the school improvement plan. The school support team provides focused technical assistance and monitors the school improvement plan throughout the year as prescribed by the level of assistance assigned.

The school support team provides technical assistance based on the specific needs of the school and/or division. In some schools, only school intervention is needed, while in other schools, division intervention and allocation of resources may have to be diverted to support the efforts of the school(s) to improve. Schools are required by 8 VAC 20-131-310 to develop a three-year school improvement plan. The school support team monitors and provides technical assistance to the school during the time it is rated accredited with warning.

Levels of Intervention and Assistance

A division-level review as prescribed by the Board of Education regulation 8 VAC 20-700 is defined as “Level A: Division Intervention.” As part of the division-level review process, the Department of Education will conduct on-site compliance monitoring of relevant state and federal laws and regulations.

For “Level B: School and Division Intervention” assistance, the school support team provides technical assistance at least monthly to the school and division. In addition, the Department of Education may complete a federal program monitoring review or conduct follow-ups to a previous visit. Eligibility for this level of technical assistance is determined primarily by considering the following criteria:

- A school that has been warned for two or more consecutive years in the same content area and did not reduce its failure rate in the subject(s) warned by at least 10% from the previous year
- A Title I school that is in school improvement status

For “Level C: School Intervention” assistance, the school support team provides technical assistance at least quarterly to schools that have demonstrated a 10 percent decrease in the failure rate from the previous year’s assessment scores in the warned areas. For Title I schools in school improvement, the team leader determines compliance with federal regulations regarding school choice, supplemental services, or required restructuring and reports any deficiencies to department staff. The Department of Education provides technical assistance and follow-up accordingly.

Table 3 provides an overview of the three levels of technical assistance provided by the school support team.

Team Leaders

A team leader is assigned to each school rated accredited with warning for both the academic review team and the school support team. Typically, the team leader is an independent contractor; however, the team leader may be a Department of Education staff member assigned to the school. The team leader is primarily responsible for coordinating schedules and activities with review team members and the school. This person is also responsible for facilitating the data collection and analysis process during on-site visits, entering the team’s findings into the academic review database, and developing and distributing reports.

For those schools that were not warned in the previous year, the team leader leads the **academic review team** during the on-site review. The team leader is responsible for coordinating follow-up visits to develop the school improvement plan and provide technical assistance necessary for the school’s improvement throughout the remainder of the year.

For those schools that were warned in the previous year, the team leader leads the **school support team** to review and update the current school improvement plan and coordinates follow-up technical assistance necessary for the school’s improvement.

Table 3: Levels of Assistance Provided by the School Support Team

Level of Technical Assistance	Description of Intervention and Support Services Provided
<p>Level A</p> <p>Division Intervention</p>	<p>The Department of Education conducts on-site reviews for both accountability and federal program monitoring or conduct follow-up to previous visits, interview school division personnel, review operational practices, and complete an analysis of data related to compliance with state and federal regulations. A division-level review is conducted as prescribed by Board of Education regulation 8 VAC 20-700.</p>
<p>Level B</p> <p>School and Division Intervention</p> <p>Follow-up monthly</p>	<p>The school support team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reviews action steps completed in the school improvement plan based on the most recent report of findings. ▪ Analyzes most current data. ▪ Reviews allocation of needed resources required for school improvement ▪ Determines the school’s priority area(s) of need to support improvement (i.e., professional development, remediation) and modifies the plan based on these areas. ▪ Assists the school to involve community and parents in updating the school improvement plan based on data. <p>The Department of Education conducts a division-level federal program monitoring review or follow-up to a previous visit.</p> <p>The division assigns a LEA representative to the school to meet with the school support team and principal monthly to monitor the implementation of the school’s improvement plan.</p> <p>The school support team provides monthly technical assistance to the principal and LEA to support the school in implementing the school improvement plan and provide support as needed for the school’s improvement.</p>

Level of Technical Assistance	Description of Intervention and Support Services Provided
<p>Level C</p> <p>School intervention</p> <p>Follow-up quarterly</p>	<p>The school support team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reviews action steps completed in the school improvement plan based on the most recent report of findings. ▪ Analyzes most current data. ▪ Reviews allocation of needed resources required for school improvement ▪ Determines the school’s priority area(s) of need to support improvement (i.e., professional development, remediation) and modifies the plan based on these areas. ▪ Assists the school to involve community and parents in updating the school improvement plan based on data. <p>For Title I schools in improvement status, the team leader and school support team determine compliance with federal regulations regarding school choice, supplemental services, or required restructuring and report any deficiencies to department staff. The Department of Education provides technical assistance and follow-up accordingly.</p> <p>The team leader and school support team, if needed, provide quarterly follow-up assistance to the principal and school improvement team to monitor continued implementation of school improvement plan.</p>

Evaluation of the School-level Academic Review Process

The Department of Education will continue to report annually to the Board on the findings of the school-level academic reviews and on the effectiveness of the academic review processes being used. Implementation of the school-level academic review process will be monitored and evaluated throughout the school year.