

# Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item



**Agenda Item:** C

**Date:** March 27, 2014

|                  |  |              |                |
|------------------|--|--------------|----------------|
| <b>Title</b>     | Final Review of Findings from the Division-Level Review and Memorandum of Understanding for Franklin City Public Schools   |              |                |
| <b>Presenter</b> | Dr. Kathleen M. Smith, Director, Office of School Improvement<br>Mrs. Edna King, Chair, Franklin City School Board<br>Dr. Michelle Belle, Superintendent, Franklin City Public Schools |              |                |
| <b>E-mail</b>    | <a href="mailto:Kathleen.Smith@doe.virginia.gov">Kathleen.Smith@doe.virginia.gov</a>   | <b>Phone</b> | (804) 225-2865 |

**Purpose of Presentation:**

Action required by state or federal law or regulation.

**Previous Review or Action:**

Previous review and action. Specify date and action taken below:

First Review: February 27, 2014

**Action Requested:**

Final review: Action requested at this meeting.

**Alignment with Board of Education Goals: Please indicate (X) all that apply:**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| X | Goal 1: Accountability for Student Learning                        |
|   | Goal 2: Rigorous Standards to Promote College and Career Readiness |
|   | Goal 3: Expanded Opportunities to Learn                            |
|   | Goal 4: Nurturing Young Learners                                   |
|   | Goal 5: Highly Qualified and Effective Educators                   |
|   | Goal 6: Sound Policies for Student Success                         |
|   | Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools                                    |
|   | Other Priority or Initiative. Specify:                             |

**Background Information and Statutory Authority:**

Goal 1: Requiring Franklin City Public Schools to undergo a division-level academic review process supports the Virginia Board of Education’s goal of ensuring accountability for student learning.

The Standards of Quality (SOQ) require local school boards to maintain *Fully Accredited* schools and to take corrective actions for schools that are not *Fully Accredited*. Further, when the Virginia Board of Education (VBOE) has obtained evidence through the academic review that the failure of schools within

a division to achieve full accreditation status is related to division-level failure to implement the SOQ, the VBOE may require a division-level academic review.

§ [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....

...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](#)....

All three schools in Franklin City Public Schools have been *Accredited with Warning* for two consecutive years, and have federal sanctions due to not meeting the federal annual measurable objectives (AMOs). The school academic review process conducted in the 2012-2103 school year revealed evidence that the failure of the schools within the division to achieve full accreditation status is related to division-level failure to implement the SOQ, consistent with Section 22.1.-253.13:3 of the SOQ.

On October 24, 2013, the VBOE placed Franklin City Public Schools in division-level academic review status and authorized the Department of Education to begin the review process.

### **Summary of Important Issues:**

#### Overview of Division-Level Review Process and Findings

The division-level review process was conducted December 1-5, 2013. Three separate reviews were conducted.

First, a full academic review of the division's curricula in the four core areas was completed by the VDOE. A Report of Findings for this review is included as Attachment A. Overall, there are two major areas of concern regarding curriculum alignment:

#### Curricula Alignment 1:

Professional development is needed in the alignment of the written, taught, and assessed curricula.

#### Curricula Alignment 2:

There was little evidence that principals and/or teachers are provided regular feedback after classroom observations by the central office administration.

Second, the Licensure and Human Resources Audit was focused as a follow-up to the review conducted nine months prior (March 2013) by Dr. James Lanham. Dr. Lanham's review shared 13 significant findings directly related to personnel, 27 additional findings not directly related to personnel, eight (8) commendations, and 26 recommendations.

The purpose of this review (December 2013) was to follow-up on the actions taken by the school division to address Dr. Lanham's significant findings and recommendations. A summary of findings from the December 2013 review is included as Attachment B.

Of the 13 significant findings identified in Dr. Lanham's review, seven (7) are identified as "resolved" while the remaining six (6) remain "unresolved." Additionally, six (6) "additional/new" findings were identified during this review.

Overall, there are two major human resources findings regarding licensed instructional staff:

Human Resources 1:

There continue to be administrators (directors, supervisors, and specialists) who work with instructional programs at the division level and/or serve as a resource to teachers who are not endorsed in the area of responsibility.

Human Resources 2:

There continue to be teachers teaching outside of their endorsement area.

Lastly, AdvancED was contracted by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) to conduct a special review of the school division's purpose, direction, governance and leadership.

AdvancED is an international organization that provides accreditation, research, and professional services to schools and divisions in Virginia and more than 70 countries. A special review team was appointed by AdvancED to make an on-site review to gather information and evidence needed to determine if the actions and behaviors within the school system, its board members and leadership were in compliance with the AdvancED Standards for Quality School Systems including, but not limited to, *Standard 1: Purpose and Direction* and *Standard 2: Governance and Leadership*. These standards are consistent with requirements of the Standards of Quality.

Specifically, the AdvancED component of the division-level review found that Franklin City Public Schools appeared to be in violation of the following AdvancED standards/indicators:

Purpose and Direction Standard 1:

The system maintains and communicates at all levels of the organization a purpose and direction for continuous improvement that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning. (Indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4)

Governance and Leadership Standard 2:

The system operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and system effectiveness. (Indicators 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6)

A comprehensive report of the AdvancED findings and specific action steps needed for improvement are included as Attachment C.

### Memorandum of Understanding

The proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Franklin City School Board and the Virginia Board of Education is included as Attachment D. The MOU, subject to annual review and revisions by the Board of Education, will be in place until all Franklin City Public Schools are *Fully Accredited*. For purposes of this MOU, the Franklin City School Board and the central office staff will adopt four key priorities and implement essential actions to comply with the Standards of Quality and improve student achievement.

1. Curricula Alignment
2. Human Resource Management and Quality of Leadership, Teachers and Support
3. Purpose and Direction
4. Leadership and Governance

The following are responsibilities of the Franklin City School Board and Franklin City Public Schools:

1. The Franklin City School Board will provide the Superintendent of Public Instruction the names and credentials of its top three finalists to fill a vacancy of Division Superintendent or Interim Superintendent at least three business days prior to making an offer to the preferred candidate. The credentials of applicants must include experience in leading successful school and division turnaround efforts.
2. The Franklin City School Board will direct the Division Superintendent to consult with the Superintendent of Public Instruction or designee on all recommendations regarding instructional programs or instructional personnel prior to being submitted to the local board for approval. Recommendations regarding instructional programs must be submitted to the Superintendent of Public Instruction by the Division Superintendent no less than 10 business days prior to the local board meeting. Recommendations regarding instructional personnel must be submitted to the Superintendent of Public Instruction no less than 5 business days prior to the local board meeting. If the Franklin City School Board takes action on instructional programs or instructional personnel contrary to the recommendations of the Superintendent of Public Instruction or designee, the board will provide a written justification to the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
3. The Franklin City School Board will approve a corrective action plan for the essential actions identified in the MOU and submit this plan to the Virginia Board of Education for review and approval at a time to be determined by the Board of Education President and Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Franklin City School Board will show evidence that the plan was shared with stakeholders for feedback and this feedback was acted upon in the corrective action plan submitted to the Virginia Board of Education for approval.
4. The Franklin City School Board will direct the Division Superintendent to provide the local board weekly updates on the steps taken to complete the essential actions in the corrective action plan and submit a monthly update to the Virginia Department of Education.
5. The Franklin City School Board will direct the Division Superintendent, upon request, to provide the Virginia Department of Education documentation on planned uses and actual expenditures of

state funds allocated to the division. The Department will review and approve planned uses and actual expenditures of federal funds.

6. The Franklin City School Board and the Division Superintendent will appear before the Virginia Board of Education, as requested, to provide reports and answer questions about the implementation of the MOU and corrective action plan.
7. The Franklin City School Board members and the Division Superintendent will participate annually in board and superintendent training, as required in the Standards of Quality § 22.1-253.13:5.D, and provided by or in collaboration with the Department of Education. Training will be documented and sent to the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
8. The Franklin City School Board will permit the Superintendent of Public Instruction's designee to meet with the local board in an ex-officio, non-voting, member capacity should the division fail to have all of its schools *Fully Accredited* by the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year.

The following are responsibilities of the Virginia Board of Education and Department of Education:

1. The Superintendent of Public Instruction will assign a designee to serve as the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) to Franklin City Public Schools.
2. The Director of the Office of School Improvement (OSI) will coordinate with the CAO, lead turnaround partners assigned to the division, division staff, and other VDOE offices to provide technical assistance in support of the MOU and corrective action plan.
3. The CAO will provide administrative oversight over processes, procedures, and strategies that are implemented in support of the MOU and funded by targeted federal and state funds and will share feedback with both the Division Superintendent and the Franklin City School Board. Such oversight shall include the assignment of a consultant with human resources experience to work with the Division Superintendent and the CAO in ensuring that instructional personnel are appropriately credentialed.
4. The CAO, in consultation with the VDOE, will approve all federal funding regarding school improvement funds or Title I prior to being submitted for reimbursement at least monthly.
5. The CAO will work closely with the school and division personnel to implement instruction aligned to the Standards of Learning. The CAO will report monthly to the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Office of School Improvement on the steps taken by Franklin City Public Schools to implement the essential actions in the corrective action plan.

### Essential Actions

As a result of the division-level review, certain essential actions are required in the division's corrective action plan to be submitted for approval by the Virginia Board of Education. The comprehensive nature of these actions will require the local board to focus its work on a few immediate priorities while making plans to implement actions that are more systemic over a longer period of time with input from the community.

Immediate Priority Actions:

The corrective action plan will include timelines that place immediate priority on essential actions that will have a direct impact on student achievement:

1. Curricula alignment
2. Quality of leadership, teachers and support

Systemic Planning Actions:

At the same time, the Franklin City School Board and the Division Superintendent must begin working on systemic governance and strategic planning issues cited in the review:

1. Purpose and direction
2. Governance and leadership

An indication of whether each essential action should be considered an immediate priority or systemic actions over a longer period of time is indicated below:

| Immediate Priority or Systemic Planning | Number     | Essential Action   |
|---|------------|--|
|   | <b>1.0</b> | <b>Curricula Alignment</b>   |
| Immediate Priority                      | 1.1        | Provide staff development to all teachers on unpacking standards and aligning the written/taught/tested curriculum.  |
| Immediate Priority                      | 1.2        | Provide and document feedback from division administrators to principals regarding observed curriculum alignment and implementation of professional development during monthly division administrative classroom walk through observations.  |
| Immediate Priority                      | 1.3        | Provide new/refresher training each year to school-level administrators on using the Formal Observation and Summative Teacher Evaluation tools to document evidence of curriculum alignment and the five components of the taught curriculum listed in the Academic Review Evaluation Tools. |
| Immediate Priority                      | 1.4        | Monitor formal observation reports completed by school-based administrators for the incorporation of detailed and specific feedback regarding the quality and alignment of the instruction observed. Revise observation forms/templates if necessary.  |
| Immediate Priority                      | 1.5        | Develop a plan for revising division-level curriculum documents to address issues revealed through the Academic Review Process (alignment to content and cognitive level, alignment to VDOE blueprint, incorporation of specific learning activities and model assessments).                 |
| Immediate Priority                      | 1.6        | Revise Formal Observation Form to reflect criteria in the Lesson Observation Evaluation Tool.  |
| Immediate Priority                      | 1.7        | Use results of the academic reviews in all schools to update required actions related to curricula alignment until all schools are <i>Fully Accredited</i> .   |
|   | <b>2.0</b> | <b>Human Resource Management and Quality of Leadership, Teachers and Support</b>   |
| Immediate Priority                      | 2.1        | Practice and/or procedures (or Board-approved policy) should be revised to ensure teacher contracts are not executed and employees do not begin work   |

| Immediate Priority or Systemic Planning | Number     | Essential Action  |
|---|------------|---|
|   |            | until Human Resources can certify licensure eligibility ensuring a valid license with the proper endorsements will be in full force for the ensuing or current school year. Additionally, all other required documents should be in place.  |
| Immediate Priority                      | 2.2        | Ensure that all administrators (directors, supervisors, and specialists) who work with instructional programs at the division level and/or serve as a resource to teachers are endorsed in the area of responsibility.  |
| Immediate Priority                      | 2.3        | Substitute teachers (long-term or short-term) should operate under the permanent teacher's name and records in order to minimize confusion and errors. The status of only permanent teachers under contract should be considered as "Teachers of Record" on the Instructional Personnel and Licensure (IPAL) Verification Report.   |
| Systemic Planning                       | 2.4        | Consider the impact of supplemental duties on staff.  |
| Immediate Priority                      | 2.5        | Ensure that teachers are not teaching outside of their endorsement area.  |
| Systemic Planning                       | 2.6        | Consider aligning the speech pathologist and school psychologist to higher pay scales competitive with surrounding localities.  |
| Immediate Priority                      | 2.7        | School board policy states that sign-on bonuses are awarded to teachers meeting certain criteria ("...to full-time teachers new to the Division who meet the definition of "highly qualified" as defined by the federal "No Child Left Behind" legislation."). Review policy to ensure the potential for securing the best qualified candidates in hard-to-staff positions and consider whether this is the most effective use of Title II funding. Human Resources will verify whether the awarding of sign-on bonuses remains within the guidelines of school board policy. |
| Systemic Planning                       | 2.8        | All courses and sections taught should be considered as "equal value" or "importance" for IPAL reporting purposes. Schedules should not be designed to place lesser qualified teachers with courses during first semester with the idea that the IPAL Verification Report is submitted during second semester.  |
| Systemic Planning                       | 2.9        | Consider providing co-teaching settings for courses when properly endorsed personnel are limited. This would possibly allow larger class enrollments with two accessible teachers and/or the possibility of certain online courses which would potentially free up staff, even temporarily.   |
| Systemic Planning                       | 2.10       | Consider contracting with local community colleges, securing online programs and/or partnering with neighboring school divisions to provide instruction for courses when the division is unable to secure properly endorsed personnel.  |
|   | <b>3.0</b> | <b>Purpose and Direction</b>  |
| Systemic Planning                       | 3.1        | Develop and implement a comprehensive, systematic process for establishing, reviewing and revising a clear purpose/direction for student achievement <b>for the school system</b> . The process must include participation by multiple stakeholder groups. The purpose/direction for the system must be reviewed and  |

| Immediate Priority or Systemic Planning | Number | Essential Action   |
|---|--------|--|
|   |        | <p>communicated on a regular basis, <i>pursuant to Code of Virginia, Section 22.1-253.13:6 (B) and Code of Virginia, Section 22.1-253.13: 6 (C).</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Structure committees that have representation from various stakeholder groups to lead in the development/revision/update of the systemwide purpose and direction.</li> <li>b. Establish guidelines for committee work to ensure that the process is formalized and implemented with fidelity on a regular schedule.</li> <li>c. Devise a method of clear documentation of the process and a record of review and communication of the system’s purpose and direction.</li> </ol>  |
| Systemic Planning                       | 3.2    | <p>Develop and implement a comprehensive, systematic process for establishing, reviewing and revising a clear purpose/direction for student achievement <b>for each school in the system.</b> The process must include participation by multiple stakeholder groups. The purpose/direction for each entity must be reviewed and communicated on a regular basis, and the school’s purpose/direction must be aligned to the system’s purpose/direction for student achievement, pursuant to <i>Code of Virginia, Section 22.1-253.13:6 (B) and Code of Virginia, Section 22.1-253.13: 6 (C).</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Structure committees that have representation from various stakeholder groups to lead in the development/revision/update of each school’s purpose/direction.</li> <li>b. Establish guidelines for committee work to ensure that the process is formalized and implemented with fidelity on a regular schedule.</li> <li>c. Devise a method of clear documentation of the process and a record of review and communication of each school’s purpose and direction.</li> </ol>   |
| Immediate Priority                      | 3.3    | <p>Establish and commit to clear levels of accountability for school system and school leadership that result in challenging, equitable learning experiences for all students.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Review and revise, as necessary, job descriptions and actual job duties being performed by each central office position.</li> <li>b. Evaluate the job performance of each central office person on a regular basis to ensure there is accountability for and measurable evidence of supporting equitable and challenging educational programs for all students at each of the three schools.</li> <li>c. Evaluate the job performance of each school leader on a regular basis to ensure there is accountability for and measurable evidence of equitable and challenging learning experiences being implemented for all students.</li> <li>d. Analyze and use student achievement results, survey responses and all other available data as a means of holding system and school leadership accountable for effective professional practices that result in improved student achievement for all students. Document this accountability process publicly and on a consistent and regular basis.</li> </ol> |

| Immediate Priority or Systemic Planning | Number     | Essential Action   |
|---|------------|--|
| Immediate Priority                      | 3.4        | <p>Evaluate the overall quality of all instructional interventions that have been implemented to improve student, school and system performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Identify the various interventions and strategies being implemented. Develop and implement evaluation procedures for the interventions and strategies deployed to achieve improvement goals.</li> <li>b. Examine all supervisory and evaluation reports and use the results as one source to hold personnel accountable for improvements in student, school and system performance.</li> </ul>  |
|   | <b>4.0</b> | <b>Leadership and Governance</b>   |
| Systemic Planning                       | 4.1        | <p>Develop and implement a plan whereby the system’s updated policies and practices require and give direction for a systemwide professional growth plan for all staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Review and update all Board policies and practices to ensure clear direction and support to increase student achievement.</li> <li>b. Ensure that an annual comprehensive needs assessment, inclusive of professional growth needs for all staff, is conducted.</li> <li>c. Provide requirements and direction, through policies and practices, for the development and implementation of a systemwide professional development plan for all staff.</li> <li>d. Monitor, in both formative and summative ways, the implementation and impact of the systemwide professional development plan.</li> </ul>   |
| Immediate Priority                      | 4.2        | <p>Ensure that all activities of school board meetings comply with applicable state and federal law to include Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) citations, <i>Code of Virginia</i> and the Franklin City Public Schools Board Policy Manual.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Implement training opportunities for all board members to be trained in their roles and responsibilities and in state law, federal mandates, board policies, etc., regarding proper protocol for executive/closed sessions at board meetings.</li> <li>b. Restrict discussions and presentations in closed meetings to those items specifically allowed by law.</li> <li>c. Create open meeting reports of class, subject-area, grade-level and/or school-level performance data, pupil attendance, discipline and truancy data to be shared publicly on a routine basis.</li> <li>d. Establish and implement a formalized plan to ensure that all information regarding academic progress, Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments, benchmarks and the Lead Turnaround Partner program is routinely shared with internal and external stakeholders in a timely and open manner.</li> </ul> |
| Systemic Planning                       | 4.3        | <p>Involve all stakeholder groups in the development of a revised, comprehensive plan for the school system and ensure the communication of the revised plan, vision and purpose to all stakeholders.</p>  |

| Immediate Priority or Systemic Planning | Number | Essential Action  |
|---|--------|---|
|   |        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Utilize the committee as referenced in Essential Action 3.1, including 3.1 a.-c. and follow the same process to develop a Comprehensive Improvement Plan for Franklin City Schools.</li> <li>b. Schedule periodic review(s) of the Comprehensive Improvement Plan and involve stakeholder groups in the review process. Document evidence of the process and the extent of stakeholder involvement.</li> <li>c. Ensure that the Comprehensive Improvement Plan reflects the current reality of the system.</li> <li>d. Communicate in multiple ways in a timely manner the revised Comprehensive Improvement Plan and documented progress.</li> <li>e. Satisfy all public requests for information in a timely manner.</li> </ul>   |
| Systemic Planning                       | 4.4    | <p>Develop and implement a formal communication plan that is measurable and sustainable in order to ensure that school system information is shared with all stakeholders in a timely manner. Ensure that the communication plan is based on an expectation of shared responsibility for effective communication at all levels of the organization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Designate a staff member to take the leadership role in sharing information internally and externally regarding all aspects of the system in a timely manner and to lead the development of the communication plan.</li> <li>b. Organize a committee with various stakeholder representatives to develop the communication plan.</li> <li>c. Engage community and parent volunteers in meaningful roles that support student achievement.</li> <li>d. Provide training for all levels of the organization in effective communication strategies.</li> </ul> |
| Immediate Priority                      | 4.5    | <p>Implement supervision and evaluation processes consistently and regularly for all staff to improve professional practices and ensure student success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Review/update job descriptions of central office supervisory and support personnel and evaluate actual duties being performed.</li> <li>b. Realign/restructure positions to more effectively deploy critical resources to serve student needs.</li> <li>c. Review supervisory and evaluation processes for all employees and ensure procedures and timelines are being followed appropriately.</li> <li>d. Ensure that the results of the supervision and evaluation processes are analyzed and used to monitor effective teaching practices and improve student learning.</li> </ul>  |

**Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:**

The contractor will cost the VDOE approximately \$45,000 per year. Additionally, federal resources for implementation of the requirements of the ESEA flexibility waiver will include an estimated \$1.0 million per year.

**Timetable for Further Review/Action:**

None

**Superintendent's Recommendation:**

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Virginia Board of Education approve the Memorandum of Understanding for Franklin City Public Schools.

**Division-Level Academic Review Findings  
Virginia Department of Education  
Office of School Improvement**

**Name of Division:** Franklin City Public Schools

**Name of the Lead Contractor Assigned to the Division:** Mrs. Cathy David

**Date of the Review:** December 4-5, 2013

**Part I.**

**Name of Team Members (include OSI, contractors, school staff and division staff):**

| <b>Name</b>               | <b>Title</b>  |
|---------------------------|---|
| Cathy David               | OSI Contractor                                      |
| Tracy Robertson           | VDOE Curriculum Specialist for English              |
| Christonya Brown          | VDOE History/Social Studies Coordinator             |
| Dr. Shannon Smith         | Franklin City Director of Instruction               |
| Dr. Debbie Harris-Rollins | Principal, S. P. Morton Elementary School           |
| Lisa Francis              | Principal, J. P. King, Jr. Middle School            |
| Travis Felts              | Principal, Franklin City High School                |
| Marice Minor              | Franklin City Director of Testing                   |
| Mrs. Sabrina Beamon       | Supervisor, Special Education                       |
| Kelley Conaway            | Franklin City Instructional Specialist              |
| Anita Harris              | Franklin City Instructional Technology Specialist   |
| Ms. Jametha Ruffin        | Assistant Principal, S. P. Morton Elementary School |
| Ms. Laura Vick            | Reading Specialist K-2                              |
| Mr. Shawn Geary           | Reading Specialist 3-5                              |
| Ms. Gwendolyn Best        | Math Specialist K-5                                 |
| Kimeko Vaughan            | Secondary Math Specialist                           |
| Diane Dovell              | English instructor                                  |
| Michael Cramer            | History instructor                                  |

## Part II. Essential Actions through June 2014

**Note: A follow-up review will be completed in April 2014. At this time, additional essential actions will be provided. These essential actions will be completed prior to September 2014.**

### Franklin City Public Schools

#### Essential Actions

1. Provide staff development to all teachers on unpacking standards and aligning the written/taught/tested curriculum.
2. Provide and document feedback from division administrators to principals regarding observed curriculum alignment and implementation of professional development during monthly division administrative classroom walk through observations.
3. Provide new/refresher training to school level administrators on using the Formal Observation and Summative Teacher Evaluation tools to document evidence of curriculum alignment and the five components of the taught curriculum listed in the Academic Review Evaluation Tools.
4. Monitor formal observation reports completed by school-based administrators for the incorporation of detailed and specific feedback regarding the quality and alignment of the instruction observed. Revise observation forms/templates if necessary.
5. Develop a plan for revising division-level curriculum documents to address issues revealed through the Academic Review Process (alignment to content and cognitive level, alignment to Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Blueprint, incorporation of specific learning activities and model assessments).
6. Revise Formal Observation Form to reflect criteria in the Lesson Observation Evaluation Tool.
7. Use results of the academic review to complete a follow-up academic review in April in order to revise division essential actions that need to be completed prior to September 2014.

### S. P. Morton Elementary School

#### Essential Actions

1. Train all teaching staff to unpack standards for content and cognitive levels and to incorporate the five components of the taught curriculum (alignment, sequence/pacing, learning experiences, assessment, supporting resources) in designing lessons. Revise/create a standard lesson plan template if necessary.
2. Provide professional development to teachers in creating formative and summative assessments that are aligned to the Standards of Learning (SOL) and curriculum frameworks in content and cognitive level. Develop a rubric or style sheet to support the development of aligned teacher-created assessments.
3. School-based administrators will monitor lesson plans and provide specific feedback to teachers on the alignment of the plans to the content and cognitive levels of the standards and curriculum framework and the remaining four components of the taught curriculum.
4. Teachers will provide detailed and differentiated lesson plans for periods of tiered instruction.
5. Teachers will provide detailed and appropriately aligned lesson plans for "Fabulous Friday" activities.
6. School-based administrators will incorporate detailed and specific feedback regarding the quality and alignment of the instruction observed in all formal observation reports.
7. Complete a follow-up academic review in April and revise school essential actions to be completed prior to September 2014.

**J. P. King, Jr. Middle School****Essential Actions**

1. Provide professional development for all stakeholders regarding the observation tool that provides expectations on providing feedback that shows evidence of the alignment of the written, taught, and assessed curriculum and includes videos and models, if possible, to provide clarity.
2. The Lead Turnaround Partner (LTP) must re-evaluate the middle school pacing guides for English. Additionally, the LTP should work in conjunction with the VDOE Curriculum Specialist on curriculum and pacing in preparation for the SOL assessments.
3. Teacher-created assessments must be evaluated in conjunction with specific lesson plans.
4. Provide professional development pertaining to the creation of teacher-made formative assessments that are aligned with standard and curriculum framework content and cognitive levels.
5. Provide professional development to teachers and communicate expectations for the alignment of lesson plans and classroom instruction to the written and assessed curriculum.
6. Complete a follow-up academic review in April and revise school essential actions to be completed prior to September 2014.

**Franklin High School****Essential Actions**

1. Focus professional development for school leadership teams on alignment of the written, taught and tested curriculum.
2. Create a consistent set of required lesson plan components and incorporate in a standard template.
3. Revise lesson plan templates to show lesson pacing and to enable teachers to show where they are in relationship to pacing guides.
4. Revise lesson plan templates to require teachers to address misconceptions and gaps in students' prior learning.
5. Provide professional development on building teacher-created assessments that are aligned to the written curriculum; are appropriately formatted; and have the appropriate number of test items to cover the content.
6. Complete a follow-up academic review in April and revise school essential actions to be completed prior to September 2014.

## **Licensure and Human Resources Follow-Up Review Report FRANKLIN CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Conducted by: Charles L. Clare  
Educational Site Contractor  
Virginia Department of Education**

### **ABSTRACT**

This Licensure and Human Resources review was conducted as a component of the Division Audit for Franklin City Public Schools as authorized by the Virginia Board of Education and coordinated by Dr. Kathleen Smith, director, Office of School Improvement at the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). The on-site review was conducted by Charles Clare on Monday, December 2, 2013, and Tuesday, December 3, 2013, and focused as a follow-up to the initial review conducted nine months prior (March 2013) by Dr. James Lanham, retired director of Licensure at the VDOE.

Dr. Lanham's review, conducted last spring, shared interview summaries, 13 significant findings directly related to personnel, 27 additional findings not directly related to personnel, eight (8) commendations, and 26 recommendations. The purpose of the December 2013 was to follow-up on the actions taken by the school division to address Dr. Lanham's significant findings and recommendations.

At the conclusion of this follow-up review, nine (9) specific commendations were identified recognizing positive steps taken by Franklin City Public Schools to address findings as stated in Dr. Lanham's review. Of the 13 significant findings identified in Dr. Lanham's review, seven (7) are identified as "resolved" while the remaining six (6) remain "unresolved." Additionally, six (6) "additional/new" findings were identified during this review.

Also, Dr. Lanham identified 27 "other findings" not directly related to personnel. Of these, 16 were deemed relevant to the scope of this follow-up review and, therefore, were revisited. Four of these items remain.

Below are recommendations as a result of the Licensure and Human Resources Follow-Up Report conducted on December 2-3, 2013, for Franklin City Public Schools.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Practice and/or procedures (or Board approved policy) need to be revised to ensure administrative personnel hold or qualify for the appropriate license and endorsement before an offer for employment is made. All license applications, including those for school and division leaders, must be submitted to the VDOE in a timely manner.
2. All administrators (directors, supervisors, and specialists) who work with instructional programs at the division level and/or serve as a resource to teachers should be endorsed in the area of responsibility.

3. Substitute teachers (long-term or short-term) should operate under the permanent teachers' names and records in order to minimize confusion and errors. The status of only permanent teachers under contract should be considered as "Teachers of Record" on the Instructional Personnel and Licensure Verification Report (IPAL).
4. It is recommended for the division leadership to consider the impact of supplemental duties on staff. While supplemental responsibilities are necessary in public school divisions, the volume afforded to a single individual (or certain individuals) may have a negative impact on the instructional program. It is noted from the provided documentation that a significant number of the division's employees receive stipends (multiple in many cases) for additional duties, coaching and other extra-curricular duties. The impact on teacher planning time, grading time, and other related issues still remains a concern.
5. Ensure that teachers are not teaching outside of their endorsement area.
6. Central administration should continue to consider aligning the speech pathologist and school psychologist to higher pay scales competitive with surrounding localities.
7. School Board Policy on GCBBB states that sign-on bonuses are awarded to teachers meeting certain criteria ("...to full-time teachers new to the division who meet the definition of "highly-qualified" as defined by the federal *No Child Left Behind* legislation."). The chart below shows collected data reflecting a significant number of bonuses awarded for the 2013-14 school year

| <b>Level</b>      | <b>School</b>                 | <b>13/14</b> |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| <i>High</i>       | Franklin High School          | 7            |
| <i>Middle</i>     | J. P. King Middle School      | 10           |
| <i>Elementary</i> | S.P. Morton Elementary School | 3            |
| <i>Division</i>   |                               | 1            |
| <b>TOTAL</b>      |                               | <b>21</b>    |

It is recommended to review this policy to ensure the potential for securing the best qualified candidates in hard-to-staff positions and consider whether this is the most effective use of the Title II funding. It is further recommended for Human Resources to verify that the awarding of sign-on bonuses remain within the guidelines of school board policy.

8. All courses and sections taught should be considered as "equal value" or "importance" for IPAL reporting purposes. Schedules should not be designed to place less-qualified teachers with courses during first semester with the idea that the IPAL verification report is submitted during second semester.

9. Consideration should be given to provide co-teaching settings for courses when properly endorsed personnel are limited. This would possibly allow larger class enrollments with two accessible teachers and/or the possibility of certain online courses which would potentially free up staff, even temporarily.
10. Consideration should be given toward contracting with local community colleges, securing online programs and/or partnering with neighboring school divisions to provide instruction for courses when the division is unable to secure properly endorsed personnel.



# **Special Review Team Report**

**Franklin City Public Schools  
Franklin, Virginia**

**Dates of Review:**

**December 1-3, 2013**

# Special Review Report

## Introduction

Franklin City Public Schools in Franklin, Virginia, was placed on ***Division Level Review Status*** in September 2013 by the Virginia Department of Education. The Virginia Department of Education (DOE) conducted academic audits and personnel audits. AdvancED was contracted by the Virginia DOE to conduct a Special Review of Standard 1: *Purpose and Direction* and Standard 2: *Governance and Leadership*. A Special Review Team was appointed by AdvancED to make an onsite review to the institution on December 1-3, 2013. The Team's purpose in reviewing the institution was to gather information and evidence needed to determine if the actions and behaviors within the school system, its board members and leadership are in violation of the *AdvancED Standards for Quality* including but not limited to Standard 1: *Purpose and Direction* and Standard 2: *Governance and Leadership*.

Specifically, the institution appeared to be in violation of the following Standards/Indicators:

*Standard 1:* The system maintains and communicates at all levels of the organization a purpose and direction for continuous improvement that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

*Indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4*

*Standard 2:* The system operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and system effectiveness.

*Indicators 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6*

## Activities of the Special Review Team

In preparation for the review, the Special Review Team reviewed the Comprehensive Plan for the school system as provided on its website, the School Improvement Plans for the system's three schools, the system's and schools' websites, the last Quality Assurance Review reports from March 2011 for each of the three schools, the State Report Card, links to newspaper articles from the *Tidewater News*, board minutes from the Virginia Department of Education website, minutes from the Franklin City Public Schools Board Of Education meetings, test data and the online Board Policy Manual. Once onsite, the team engaged in the following activities:

- Meetings with the superintendent, five of the seven members of the governing body, members of the system level leadership team, three school principals, parents and community representatives.
- Phone interviews with the two board members who could not join the team in person, as well as the Vice-Mayor and a City Council member.
- Interviews with external stakeholders including the Mayor, the City Manager, City Council members, Franklin Educational Foundation, the Faith-Based community, the Franklin Housing Authority, administration from the regional hospital and parents.
- Artifact review including the system's organizational chart, the Job Descriptions Manual for the school system, the superintendent's contract, the contract with Edison Learning, the classroom walkthrough observation form used by school system office personnel, the Franklin High School Course Offering Guide, various sample survey forms with no results, actual survey results for some schools, the Virginia School Board Association Code of Conduct for School Board Members (signed by seven board members), the Franklin City Public Schools Annual Status Report, the Instructional Personnel Report for Division 135-Franklin City Public Schools 2013-2014, the School Improvement Reports from the three schools, various curriculum documents and test data.
- Dialogue and deliberations concerning the degree to which the institution met the AdvancED Standards and Indicators for Standard 1: *Purpose and Direction* and Standard 2: *Governance and Leadership*.

# Findings

Based upon the information collected and reviewed, the Special Review Team found sufficient evidence to support a finding that the institution is in violation of AdvancED Standard 1: *Purpose and Direction*: Indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4, and Standard 2: *Governance and Leadership*: Indicators 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6. The findings with each Indicator identified as deficient are given below.

## Standard 1: Purpose and Direction

**The system maintains and communicates at all levels of the organization a purpose and direction for continuous improvement that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.**

### Indicator:

|         |  |                     |
|---------|--|---------------------|
| 1.1     | The system engages in a systematic, inclusive and comprehensive process to review, revise and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.   | <b>Rating<br/>1</b> |
| Level 4 | The process for review, revision and communication of the system’s purpose is clearly documented, and a record of the use and results of the process is maintained. The process is formalized and implemented with fidelity on a regular schedule. The process includes participation by representatives selected at random from all stakeholder groups. The purpose statement clearly focuses on student success. |                     |
| Level 3 | The system’s process for review, revision and communication of the purpose statement is documented. The process is formalized and implemented on a regular schedule. The process includes participation by representatives from all stakeholder groups. The purpose statement focuses on student success.  |                     |
| Level 2 | The system has a process for review, revision and communication of its purpose. The process has been implemented. The process includes participation by representatives from stakeholder groups. The purpose statement focuses primarily on student success.   |                     |
| Level 1 | No process to review, revise or communicate a system purpose exists. Stakeholders are rarely asked for input regarding the purpose of the system.  |                     |

During interviews, evidence confirmed that there was inconsistent knowledge regarding the revision process for the goals, mission/vision, purpose and direction of the school system. Some stakeholders were unaware of any revisions while others stated that some central office administrators had been involved in a recent revision of the purpose and direction, which will be included on the December board agenda for approval. When asked what the purpose/vision of the school system is, interviewees gave personal responses. “To establish partnerships with parents and community,” “To provide a nurturing environment for education,” “To offer a holistic education for our students,” and “To meet the needs of all students” were some of the responses from board members.

The Franklin City Public Schools Status Report had the “old” mission statement on it, but the Comprehensive Plan Update to be presented for board approval in December, had a different mission statement. There was no documentation available of the revision process used for the mission/purpose/direction. No external stakeholders interviewed had been involved in any updates or the development of the school system purpose and direction, and they were not aware of a process for becoming involved.

The school system website contains the Comprehensive Plan with the mission and shared beliefs that were developed years ago. There was no evidence of a communication plan to stakeholders regarding the system’s purpose/vision. The Annual Status Report, which is distributed once a year, is the only example of written communication containing the current mission and beliefs that was shared with the External Review Team. There was no posting of the mission and belief statements at the central office or on any other publications shared with the External Review Team.

**Required Action # 1:**

Develop and implement a comprehensive, systematic process for establishing, reviewing and revising a clear purpose/direction for student achievement for the school system. The process must include participation by multiple stakeholder groups. The purpose/direction for the system must be reviewed and communicated on a regular basis, *pursuant to Code of Virginia, Section 22.1-253.13:6 (B) and Code of Virginia, Section 22.1-253.13: 6 (C).*

**Directives for Required Action #1:**

1. Structure committees that have representation from various stakeholder groups to lead in the development/revision/update of the system-wide purpose and direction.
2. Establish guidelines for committee work to ensure that the process is formalized and implemented with fidelity on a regular schedule.
3. Devise a method of clear documentation of the process and a record of review and communication of the system’s purpose and direction.

**Indicator:**

|            |   |                     |
|------------|---|---------------------|
| <b>1.2</b> | The system ensures that each school engages in a systematic, inclusive and comprehensive process to review, revise and communicate a school purpose for student success.  | <b>Rating<br/>1</b> |
| Level 4    | System policies and procedures clearly outline the expectations for schools regarding a systematic, inclusive and comprehensive process for review, revision and communication of a purpose for student success. System personnel monitor and maintain data about each school and provide feedback and training for the improvement of the implementation of the process to school personnel. |                     |
| Level 3    | System policies and procedures outline the expectations for schools regarding a systematic, inclusive and comprehensive process for review, revision and communication of a purpose for student success. System personnel monitor and maintain data about each school and provide feedback for the improvement of the implementation of the process to school personnel.                      |                     |
| Level 2    | System policies and procedures outline the expectations for schools regarding a process for review, revision and communication of a purpose for student success. System personnel monitor each school and sometimes provide feedback for the improvement of the implementation of the process to school personnel.  |                     |
| Level 1    | System policies outline the expectations for schools regarding a process for review, revision and communication of a purpose for student success. System personnel occasionally monitor each school and sometimes provide feedback concerning the process to school personnel.  |                     |

The External Review Team found a lack of documented evidence regarding the process used to develop and implement each school’s purpose and direction. Interviews of staff and community members revealed little understanding of how the schools update their vision and how they ensure alignment to the system’s vision. The School Improvement Plan, as well as the mission and beliefs, for each of the schools are posted on the schools’

websites. Yet, there is no documentation of the development process, the review process or who was involved in the revision/review. No artifacts were found that documented a comprehensive, inclusive process for reviewing and communicating each school’s purpose and direction for improving student achievement. Most interviewees were unsure of the system’s mission or vision and gave varying personal views on what they thought it might be. Therefore, alignment between a school’s vision and the system’s vision/purpose was not communicated to the External Review Team.

**Required Action # 2:**

Develop and implement a comprehensive, systematic process for establishing, reviewing and revising a clear purpose/direction for student achievement for each school in the system. The process must include participation by multiple stakeholder groups. The purpose/direction for each entity must be reviewed and communicated on a regular basis, and the schools’ purpose/direction must be aligned to the system’s purpose/direction for student achievement, *pursuant to Code of Virginia, Section 22.1-253.13:6 (B) and Code of Virginia, Section 22.1-253.13: 6 (C).*

**Directives for Required Action #2:**

1. Structure committees that have representation from various stakeholder groups to lead in the development/revision/update of each schools’ purpose/direction.
2. Establish guidelines for committee work to ensure that the process is formalized and implemented with fidelity on a regular schedule.
3. Devise a method of clear documentation of the process and a record of review and communication of each school’s purpose and direction.

**Indicator:**

|            |   |                     |
|------------|---|---------------------|
| <b>1.3</b> | The school leadership and staff at all levels of the system commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking and life skills.   | <b>Rating<br/>1</b> |
| Level 4    | Commitment to shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning is clearly evident in documentation and decision making. This commitment is always reflected in communication among leaders and staff. Challenging educational programs and equitable learning experiences are implemented in a measurable way so that all students achieve learning, thinking and life skills necessary for success. Evidence indicates a strong commitment to instructional practices that include active student engagement, a focus on depth of understanding and the application of knowledge and skills. System leadership and staff hold one another accountable to high expectations for professional practice. |                     |
| Level 3    | Commitment to shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning is evident in documentation and decision making. This commitment is regularly reflected in communication among leaders and staff. Challenging educational programs and equitable learning experiences are implemented so that all students achieve learning, thinking and life skills necessary for success. Evidence indicates a commitment to instructional practices that include active student engagement, a focus on depth of understanding and the application of knowledge and skills. System leadership and staff share high expectations for professional practice.   |                     |

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| Level 2 | Commitment to shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning is sometimes evident in documentation. This commitment is sometimes reflected in communication among leaders and most staff. Some challenging educational programs and equitable learning experiences are implemented so that all students achieve some degree of learning, thinking and life skills. Evidence indicates some commitment to instructional practices that include active student engagement, a focus on depth of understanding and the application of knowledge and skills. System leadership maintains high expectations for professional practice. |
| Level 1 | Minimal or no evidence exists that indicates the culture of the system is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning. Educational programs challenge few or no students and are provided in a way that few students achieve the learning, thinking and life skills necessary for success. Learning experiences for students are rarely equitable. Instructional practices rarely include active student engagement, a focus on depth of understanding and the application of knowledge and skills. Little or no commitment to high expectations for professional practice is evident.                               |

As the External Review Team compared job descriptions with the information gathered from interviews with system personnel, discrepancies emerged. Actual job tasks were different from the job descriptions for numerous positions. Interviews revealed that there was not a uniform commitment to a shared vision and beliefs for the school system. When asked about staff evaluation processes, timelines and how results are used, there were varying responses. Even though there was not clarity in these processes, the Director of Instruction had developed a clear chart of who reports to her for what specific duties.

When questioned about a shared vision on the professional development targets established for system personnel so that all staff maintained a common focus and high expectations for professional practices, there was very little agreement on what the professional development plan is. Two persons interviewed gave differentiation, vertical alignment and data analysis as the three target areas system-wide. Others gave a variety of topics but mainly responded that the schools were site-based and determined their own focus.

The School Improvement Plan for the elementary school, as posted on the website, reported professional development provided by the school system office staff but noted that it was not based on school data. A statement extracted from the S.P. Morton Elementary Plan regarding school system office training was, “Their opportunities for us have been one shot with no follow-up, monitoring or evaluation.”

Some interviewees reported that the typical school-level perception of system office staff was that they were punitive and evaluative, but continued that system office staff members were now trying to change that concept to one of support. At the middle school level, the School Improvement Report states that the school system is in the process of developing its capacity for improvement by reorganizing the central office to support improvement efforts, reorienting the organization and shifting its culture and beliefs.

Based on discussions with central office personnel, the External Review Team determined that limited school-level observations and support sessions are being made by most system-level staff. Once each 4.5 week interval, a select group of central office leadership personnel visit each school site and conduct some walk-through observations. Results are shared verbally with the school principal but no written results are given to the school leadership and no verbal or written reports of these observations are provided to teachers by the system staff.

No clear action plans were provided for the External Review Team that yielded results measured as improvement in the various indicators as reported on the State Report Card. The State Report Card for Franklin City Public Schools 2013-2014 reported that the school system is not meeting the Federal Graduation Indicator for all students, for Gap Group 1 (Students with Disabilities), Gap Group 2 (Black Students), and for Economically Disadvantaged Students.

Not meeting the Federal Annual Measurable Objectives in student performance in mathematics was additional data indicative of inequitable learning experiences for all students.

Surveys had been administered and some results were available for review by the External Review Team. Yet, no evidence was found or substantiated through interviews that the survey results were being used to improve student learning.

**Required Action # 3:**

Establish and commit to clear levels of accountability for school system and school leadership that result in challenging, equitable learning experiences for all students.

**Directives for Required Action # 3:**

1. Review and revise, as necessary, job descriptions and actual job duties being performed by each central office position.
2. Evaluate the job performance of each central-office person on a regular basis to ensure there is accountability for and measurable evidence of supporting equitable and challenging educational programs for all students at each of the three schools.
3. Evaluate the job performance of each school leader on a regular basis to ensure there is accountability for, and measurable evidence of equitable and challenging learning experiences being implemented for all students.
4. Analyze and use student achievement results, survey responses and all other available data as a means of holding system and school leadership accountable for effective professional practices that result in improved student achievement for all students. Document this accountability process publicly and on a consistent and regular basis.

**Indicator:**

|            |   |                     |
|------------|---|---------------------|
| <b>1.4</b> | Leadership at all levels of the system implement a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.   | <b>Rating<br/>1</b> |
| Level 4    | Leaders at all levels of the system require the use of a documented, systematic continuous improvement process for improving student learning and the conditions that support learning. All stakeholder groups work collaboratively and consistently in authentic and meaningful ways that build and sustain ownership of the system’s purpose and direction. Personnel systematically maintain, use and communicate a profile with current and comprehensive data on student, school and system performance. The profile contains thorough analyses of a broad range of data used to identify goals for the improvement of conditions that support student learning and that are aligned with the system’s purpose. All improvement goals have measurable performance targets. The process includes action planning that identifies measurable objectives, strategies, activities, resources and timelines for achieving all improvement goals. System personnel hold one another accountable for and evaluate the overall quality of the implementation of all interventions and strategies. The process is reviewed and evaluated regularly. Documentation that the process is implemented with fidelity and yields improved student achievement and conditions that support student learning is available and communicated to stakeholders. |                     |
| Level 3    | Leaders at all levels of the system implement a documented, systematic continuous improvement process for improving student learning and the conditions that support learning. All stakeholder groups are engaged in the process. Personnel maintain a profile with current and comprehensive data on student, school and system performance. The profile contains analyses of data used to identify goals for the improvement of conditions that support student learning and that are aligned with the system’s purpose. Improvement goals have measurable performance targets. The   |                     |

|         |   |
|---------|---|
|         | <p>process includes action planning that identifies measurable objectives, strategies, activities, resources and timelines for achieving improvement goals. Leaders hold all personnel accountable for and evaluate the overall quality of the implementation of all interventions and strategies. The process is reviewed and evaluated.</p> <p>Documentation that the process yields improved student achievement and conditions that support student learning is available and communicated to stakeholders.</p>   |
| Level 2 | <p>Most leaders throughout the system implement a continuous improvement process for improving student learning and the conditions that support learning. Some stakeholder groups are engaged in the process. School personnel maintain a profile with data on student, school and system performance. The profile contains data used to identify goals for the improvement of achievement and instruction that are aligned with the system's purpose. The process includes action planning that identifies measurable objectives, strategies, activities, resources and timelines for achieving improvement goals. Most interventions and strategies are implemented with fidelity. Some documentation that the process yields improved student achievement and conditions that support student learning is available.</p> |
| Level 1 | <p>A continuous improvement process for improving student learning and the conditions that support learning is used randomly and/or ineffectively. The profile is rarely updated or used by personnel and contains little or no useful data. Goals selected for improvement, if they exist, reflect the minimum required by governmental or organizational oversight agencies. Few or no interventions and strategies are implemented with fidelity. Documentation linking the process to improved student achievement and conditions that support student learning is unclear or non-existent.</p>   |

Interviews and document reviews revealed numerous instructional initiatives (Saturday SOL Math Academies, Targeted Instruction Bell, Math Boot Camp, eWalks, Edison Learning, tiered instruction, SchoolNet, DataCation, Book Buddies, services of a reading specialist, use of Triage Teams, etc.) are being implemented but very limited evaluative criteria and results of effectiveness were provided to the External Review Team. When asked about effectiveness of the program initiatives, many commented that Edison Learning shares their reports with the Board but not publicly. No real evaluation procedures or processes of these programs and initiatives could be reported. Positions had been added at schools but no accountability measures were shared to link these personnel decisions to improved student achievement. School system office personnel did not communicate their evaluations being tied to improvements in student and school performance.

Interviews and review of artifacts did not reveal a system-wide professional development plan based on a thorough needs analysis. The only documentation provided was a calendar of professional development activities that had been held. Evaluations of the various trainings were not available to the External Review Team.

No formal communication plan exists for the school system. Reports from interviews validated the need for decisions regarding improvement initiatives and the evaluation of their effectiveness to be shared with internal and external audiences.

**Required Action # 4:**

Evaluate the overall quality of all instructional interventions that have been implemented to improve student, school and system performance.

**Directives for Required Action # 4:**

1. Identify the various interventions and strategies being implemented. Develop and implement evaluation procedures for the interventions and strategies deployed to achieve improvement goals.

2. Examine all supervisory and evaluation reports and use the results as one source to hold personnel accountable for improvements in student, school and system performance.

## **Standard 2: Governance and Leadership**

**The system operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and system effectiveness.**

**Indicator:**

|            |  |                     |
|------------|--|---------------------|
| <b>2.1</b> | The governing body establishes policies and support practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools.  | <b>Rating<br/>1</b> |
| Level 4    | Policies and practices clearly and directly support the system’s purpose and direction and the effective operation of the system and its schools. Policies and practices require and have mechanisms in place for monitoring conditions that support student learning, effective instruction and assessment that produce equitable and challenging learning experiences for all students. There are policies and practices requiring and giving direction for professional growth of all staff. Policies and practices provide clear requirements, direction for and oversight of fiscal management at all levels of the system. |                     |
| Level 3    | Policies and practices support the system’s purpose and direction and the effective operation of the system and its schools. Policies and practices promote conditions that support student learning, effective instruction and assessment that produce equitable and challenging learning experiences for all students. There are policies and practices regarding professional growth of all staff. Policies and practices provide requirements, direction for and oversight of fiscal management at all levels of the system.   |                     |
| Level 2    | Policies and practices generally support the system’s purpose and direction and the effective operation of the system and its schools. Most policies and practices promote conditions that support student learning, effective instruction and assessment that produce equitable and challenging learning experiences for all students. There are policies and practices regarding professional growth of staff. Policies and practices provide requirements and oversight of fiscal management.   |                     |
| Level 1    | Little connection exists between policies and practices of the governing board and the purpose, direction and effective operation of the system and its schools. Policies and practices seldom or never address conditions that support student learning, effective instruction or assessment that produce equitable and challenging learning experiences for students. There are few or no policies and practices regarding professional growth of staff. Policies provide requirements of fiscal management.   |                     |

Through the review of artifacts, documents and interviews with board members, school and school system staff, parents and community members, the External Review Team verified the need for a system-wide professional development plan. The school system staff presented a four-page “Professional Development Calendar” that listed activities held on given dates at the various schools as the system’s professional development plan; however, there was no overall plan based upon an assessment of current needs. The need for a more formalized professional development plan also was cited in the Academic Review conducted by the Virginia Department of Education in 2012-13 and the follow-up review in April 2013.

Multiple surveys administered at various schools indicated strong needs for professional development. Examples include the “Assessment of Instructional Initiatives” for 2012-2013 administered at J. P. King, Jr. Middle School. Seventy-five percent of the respondents (18 teachers) reported a need for more professional development with follow-through. “Documenting Learner Progress” was an area in which 72 percent of respondents reported a need for more professional development. The instructional initiative, “Use of Data,” was rated at a partial implementation status and needing more support by 72 percent of teachers. The Franklin City Public Schools State Report Card for 2013-2014 indicated the school system’s status as not meeting some of the federally required Annual Measurable Objectives in student achievement. Research has clearly indicated that supporting the improvement of instructional practices of teachers ensures student success.

**Required Action # 5:**

Develop and implement a plan whereby the system’s updated policies and practices require and give direction for a system-wide professional growth plan for all staff.

**Directives for Required Action #5:**

1. Review and update all Board policies and practices to ensure clear direction and support.
2. Ensure that an annual comprehensive needs assessment, inclusive of professional growth needs for all staff, is conducted.
3. Provide requirements and direction, through policies and practices, for the development and implementation of a system-wide professional development plan for all staff.
4. Monitor, in both formative and summative ways, the implementation and impact of the system-wide professional development plan.

**Indicator:**

|            |  |                     |
|------------|--|---------------------|
| <b>2.2</b> | The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.   | <b>Rating<br/>1</b> |
| Level 4    | The governing body has implemented a process to evaluate its decisions and actions to ensure they are in accordance with defined roles and responsibilities, a formally adopted code of ethics and free of conflict of interest. Governing body members are required to participate in a systematic, formal professional development process regarding the roles and responsibilities of the governing body and its individual members. The professional development curriculum also includes conflict resolution, decision-making, supervision and evaluation and fiscal responsibility. Members comply with all policies, procedures, laws and regulations and function as a cohesive unit for the benefit of effective system operation and student learning. |                     |
| Level 3    | The governing body has a process to ensure that its decisions and actions are in accordance with defined roles and responsibilities, a code of ethics and free of conflict of interest. Governing body members participate in a systematic, formal professional development process regarding the roles and responsibilities of the governing body and its individual members. The governing body complies with all policies, procedures, laws and regulations, and function as a cohesive unit.   |                     |
| Level 2    | The governing body ensures that its decisions and actions are in accordance with defined roles and responsibilities, are ethical and free of conflict of interest. Governing body members participate in professional development regarding the roles and responsibilities of the governing body and its individual members. The governing body complies with all policies, procedures, laws and regulations.  |                     |

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| Level 1 | The governing body has no method for or does not ensure that decisions and actions are free of conflict of interest, are ethical and in accordance with defined roles and responsibilities. Governing body members rarely or never participate in professional development regarding the roles and responsibilities of the governing body and its individual members. Evidence indicates the governing body does not always comply with policies, procedures, laws and regulations. |
|---------|---|

Interviews with board members and system and school leadership revealed that information regarding the academic progress of classes, grade levels and schools is reviewed during closed school board meetings. Routine reports by Edison Learning are given in closed meetings and not provided for the public. Numerous interviewees shared their concerns regarding this kind of information being shared in closed session and not with parents and the community in open forums. Elected and appointed officials, community members and parents indicated that the timely sharing of such information regarding student performance and activities in the system’s improvement plan is critical. Representatives from all stakeholder groups interviewed expressed the need for more transparency with such information in order to inform the public, improve avenues of communication and develop trust. Comments in one group included, “Until the district’s leadership balances a concern for job tasks with a concern for relationships within the system and the community, there will not be the trust cultivated that is necessary to fulfill the mission of educating our students.” “The board and the school system employees should check the community’s pulse to see whether board goals are in alignment with community values and beliefs,” stated one interviewee. “Failure to provide effective internal and external communication contributes to negative perceptions regarding student achievement and school performance” is a comment reflective of many heard by the External Review Team.

The school board members for Franklin City Public Schools annually review and sign the Virginia School Board Association (VSBA) Code of Conduct for School Board Members, a guiding document for board members that was last signed on July 7, 2013 by the seven board members. However, interviews revealed disregard of some of the appropriate conduct expectations to which they agreed. Also, the Board Governance section of the Board Policy Manual was reviewed by the External Review Team and based on the review, other available documentation and interviews, evidence indicates non-compliance with Board Policy BDC on “Closed Sessions.”

Board members have divergent views regarding the improvement of the school system, as validated during interviews. Though school board meetings are cordial, interviews revealed that team building and personalized, focused board training in identified areas of need for the school board could improve relations and better position the Board to support and accelerate school improvement.

**Required Action# 6:**

Ensure that all activities of school board meetings comply with applicable state and federal law to include FOIA, FERPA citations, Code of Virginia and the Franklin City Public Schools Board Policy Manual.

**Directives for Required Action # 6:**

1. Implement training opportunities for all board members to be trained in their roles and responsibilities and in state law, federal mandates, board policies, etc. regarding proper protocol for executive/closed sessions at board meetings.
2. Restrict discussions and presentations in closed meetings to those items specifically allowed by law.
3. Create open meeting reports of class, subject-area, grade-level and/or school-level performance data, pupil attendance, discipline and truancy data to be shared publicly on a routine basis.
4. Establish and implement a formalized plan to ensure that all information regarding academic progress, SOL assessments, benchmarks and the Edison Learning partnership project is routinely shared with internal and external stakeholders in a timely and open manner.

**Indicator:**

|            |  |                     |
|------------|--|---------------------|
| <b>2.4</b> | Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system’s purpose and direction.  | <b>Rating<br/>1</b> |
| Level 4    | Leaders and staff throughout the system deliberately and consistently align their decisions and actions toward continuous improvement to achieve the system’s purpose. They encourage, support and expect all personnel to maintain high Standards and to hold students to high Standards in all courses of study. All stakeholders are collectively accountable for maintaining and improving conditions that support student learning. Leaders throughout the system actively and consistently support and encourage innovation, collaboration, shared leadership and rigorous professional growth. The culture is characterized by collaboration and a sense of community among all stakeholders. |                     |
| Level 3    | Leaders and staff throughout the system align their decisions and actions toward continuous improvement to achieve the system’s purpose. They expect all personnel to maintain high Standards and to hold students to high Standards in all courses of study. All leaders and staff are collectively accountable for maintaining and improving conditions that support student learning. Leaders throughout the system support innovation, collaboration, shared leadership and professional growth. The culture is characterized by collaboration and a sense of community.   |                     |
| Level 2    | Most leaders and staff within the system make some decisions and take some actions toward continuous improvement. They expect all personnel and students to be held to Standards. Leaders and staff express a desire for collective accountability for maintaining the conditions that support student learning. Leaders sometimes support innovation, collaboration, shared leadership and professional growth. The culture is characterized by a minimal degree of collaboration and limited sense of community.   |                     |
| Level 1    | Decisions and actions seldom or never support continuous improvement. Leaders may or may not expect personnel to maintain Standards or for students to learn. There is little or no evidence of or desire for collective accountability for student learning. Leaders seldom or never support innovation, collaboration, shared leadership and professional growth. The culture is characterized by a minimal degree of collaboration and little or no sense of community.   |                     |

Interviews with the superintendent and some board members revealed that the vision and purpose were recently reviewed during an administrators’ council meeting. Neither parent nor community input or participation was solicited in the development of the revised vision and purpose. Additionally, there was little evidence of goal development. The draft of the revised Comprehensive Plan was submitted to the Board for first reading at the November school board meeting and is to be presented in December for approval, as verified by the superintendent. No external stakeholder interviewed by the External Review Team knew anything about the Comprehensive Plan or its recent revision and had no knowledge of any discussion or communication regarding purpose, direction, mission or vision.

Interviewee responses indicate evidence of a lack of openness by the system in providing essential data about the operation of schools and the school system to stakeholders and constituent groups. Community participants had little to no knowledge of “next steps” and “turnaround project plans” for moving the three schools forward with academic growth. Several participants shared incidents of concerned citizens requesting information but not having their requests acknowledged. A number of interviewees stated they did not want to believe all the negativity published in the local paper about the school system’s state of affairs but had no consistent, reliable, internal source of information attempting to be “front and center” in the community to refute the newspaper’s reporting.

The Code of Virginia requires that school systems update their comprehensive plans regularly to include mission, vision, shared beliefs, etc. While system level staff began revising the current Comprehensive Plan (dated 2009) in the summer of 2013, there is no evidence that stakeholder groups, including the school board, have been part of the revision process. The most recent work regarding updating the Comprehensive Plan has included only specified central office administrative staff. School board members have been made aware of the staff's efforts; however, they have not been a part of the process.

**Required Action # 7:**

Involve all stakeholder groups in the development of a revised, comprehensive plan for the school system and ensure the communication of the revised plan, vision and purpose to all stakeholders.

**Directives for Required Action # 7:**

1. Utilize the committee as referenced in Required Action #1 (Directives 1, 2, and 3) and follow the same process to develop a Comprehensive Improvement Plan for Franklin City Schools.
2. Schedule periodic review(s) of the Comprehensive Plan and involve stakeholder groups in the review process. Document evidence of the process and the extent of stakeholder involvement.
3. Ensure that the Comprehensive Plan reflects the current reality of the system.
4. Communicate in multiple ways in a timely manner the revised Comprehensive Plan and documented progress.
5. Satisfy all public requests for information in a timely manner.

**Indicator:**

|            |   |                     |
|------------|---|---------------------|
| <b>2.5</b> | Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction.   | <b>Rating<br/>1</b> |
| Level 4    | Leaders consistently communicate effectively with appropriate and varied representatives from stakeholder groups, provide opportunities for stakeholders to shape decisions, solicit feedback and respond to stakeholders, work collaboratively on system and school improvement efforts and provide and support meaningful leadership roles for stakeholders. System and school leaders' proactive and persistent efforts result in measurable, active stakeholder participation; positive engagement in the system and its schools; a strong sense of community; and ownership. |                     |
| Level 3    | Leaders communicate effectively with appropriate and varied representatives from stakeholder groups, provide opportunities for stakeholders to shape decisions, solicit feedback and respond to stakeholders, work collaboratively on system and school improvement efforts and provide and support meaningful leadership roles for stakeholders. System and school leaders' efforts result in measurable, active stakeholder participation; engagement in the system and its schools; a sense of community; and ownership.   |                     |
| Level 2    | Leaders sometimes communicate effectively with stakeholder groups, provide opportunities for stakeholders to shape decisions, solicit feedback from stakeholders, work collaboratively on school improvement efforts and provide some leadership roles for stakeholders. System and school leaders' efforts result in some stakeholder participation and engagement in the system and its schools.  |                     |
| Level 1    | Leaders rarely or never communicate with stakeholder groups. Little or no work on system or school improvement efforts is collaborative, and stakeholders have little or no opportunity for leadership. System and school leaders' efforts result in limited or no stakeholder participation and engagement in the system or its schools.   |                     |

Interviews with all stakeholder groups revealed a strong desire to have the school system designate a system employee as public relations coordinator. Information regarding student achievement, school and system progress, and plans for improvement are seldom shared with all stakeholder groups, which contributes to negative perceptions.

Although the school system administers various surveys, there was limited evidence that the data generated from surveys has been utilized in a meaningful way to guide decision-making. The Franklin City Public Schools Annual Status Report is the only written communication example from the system-level that was shared with the External Review Team. Interviewees substantiated that the status report was the only publication/newsletter/brochure they had seen this year. Citizens who were interviewed indicated that they learn about the difficulties facing Franklin City Public Schools from outside media sources, not from communication efforts from internal school system personnel. Stakeholders interviewed repeatedly expressed their desire to know about the system’s plan for improvement, what has been done and what is being done differently to get desired results in student achievement. They expressed a lack of confidence in the system because leadership has not shared a clear picture with them of the schools’ “labels” and the appropriate “next steps”. As one stakeholder stated, “Now, no matter if it’s good or bad, there has been lots of community interest stirred up. We want to know the clear picture but are having difficulty getting it.”

Internal and external groups articulated the need for the Board to develop formal communication processes and collaborative structures to guide their work. Some felt that being able to convincingly communicate board decisions is as important as, and often more important than, the decisions themselves.

**Required Action # 8:**

Develop and implement a formal communication plan that is measureable and sustainable in order to ensure that school system information is shared with all stakeholders in a timely manner. Ensure that the plan is based on an expectation of shared responsibility for effective communication at all levels of the organization.

**Directives for Required Action # 8:**

1. Designate a staff member to take the leadership role in sharing information internally and externally regarding all aspects of the system in a timely manner and to lead the development of the communication plan.
2. Organize a committee with various stakeholder representatives to develop the communication plan.
3. Engage community and parent volunteers in meaningful roles that support student achievement.
4. Provide training for all levels of the organization in effective communication strategies.

**Indicator:**

|         |   |                     |
|---------|---|---------------------|
| 2.6     | Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice in all areas of the system and improved student success.   | <b>Rating<br/>1</b> |
| Level 4 | The primary focus of the criteria and processes of supervision and evaluation is improving professional practice in all areas of the system and ensuring student success. Supervision and evaluation processes are consistently and regularly implemented. The results of the supervision and evaluation processes are analyzed carefully and used to monitor and effectively adjust professional practice throughout the system and ensure student learning. |                     |
| Level 3 | The focus of the criteria and processes of supervision and evaluation is improving professional practice throughout the system and improving student success. Supervision and evaluation processes are regularly implemented. The results of the supervision and evaluation processes are used to monitor and effectively adjust professional practice throughout the system and improve student learning.  |                     |

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| Level 2 | The criteria and processes of supervision and evaluation include references to system-wide professional practices and student success. Supervision and evaluation processes are implemented at minimal levels. The results of the supervision and evaluation processes are used sometimes to monitor and effectively adjust professional practice and improve student learning. |
| Level 1 | The criteria and processes of supervision and evaluation have little or no focus on improving professional practice or student success. Supervision and evaluation processes are randomly implemented if at all. Results of the supervision and evaluation processes, if any, are used rarely or never.   |

Interviews with school-level and system-level administrators, combined with the review of job descriptions, as presented in the Franklin Job Descriptions notebook, confirmed that actual duties and assignments do not necessarily align with job descriptions.

At the mid-point of each nine weeks, a meeting is held at each of the three schools in which selected system-level persons meet with the school-level leadership team. On this given day, the system personnel conduct some classroom walk-through observations and then share the results verbally with the school principal. They do not give written or verbal feedback to teachers. School system personnel stated this was often the only classroom visits they made. Most central office personnel informed the External Review Team that they did not conduct regular, extended classroom observations. Their support and suggestions are given to the principal, and he/she uses the information /training tips/data in whatever manner they determine is best.

The school system’s three schools are led by administrators who are in their first or second year as principal. In fact, the middle school has had six principals in six years. The current principal is in her second year as principal. At the middle school, 43 percent of the teaching staff has two years or less of teaching experience.

According to the Instructional Personnel Report (IPAL) for Division 135-Franklin City Public Schools 2013-2014, 16 classes across the system are taught by teachers who are not “Highly Qualified” while 10 classes are taught by persons who are not properly endorsed and licensed. Nine of these ten non-licensed persons are at Franklin High School. As noted in interviews, a system with these kinds of personnel data/statistics needs to implement supervisory and evaluation processes and formally and consistently monitor the procedures to ensure student success. “All hands needed on deck” is the phrase mentioned in an interview. When asked to explain, the interviewee agreed with numerous others who felt the schools needed more instructional guidance and support. It was actually stated in an interview that, “Central office exists to deliver DOE mandates, not to directly support schools and classrooms.”

The board is responsible for evaluating the superintendent. Its role in staff assessment is solely to keep its eye on the school organization’s goals and to judge through objective data how well the goals are being met. Numerous stakeholders responded that the Board often confuses the evaluation of individual performance with the monitoring of organizational performance.

Aligning job descriptions with the evaluation process for all personnel will serve to improve the quality of teaching and learning that occurs throughout the system, resulting in a challenging, yet equitable curriculum for students, and improved accountability for student achievement.

**Required Action # 9:**

Implement supervision and evaluation processes consistently and regularly for all staff to improve professional practices and ensure student success.

### **Directives for Required Action #9:**

1. Review/update job descriptions of central office supervisory and support personnel and evaluate actual duties being performed.
2. Realign/restructure positions to more effectively deploy critical resources to serve student needs.
3. Review supervisory and evaluation processes for all employees and ensure procedures and timelines are being followed appropriately.
4. Ensure that the results of the supervision and evaluation processes are analyzed and used to monitor effective teaching practices and improve student learning.

## **Required Actions**

The institution must address the nine Required Actions as specified by the Special Review Team based on the evidence and findings linked to Standard 1: *Purpose and Direction*, Indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4, and Standard 2: *Governance and Leadership*, Indicators 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6.

The Special Review Team recommends a Monitoring Team be designated to conduct an on-site review in six months to monitor/review the system's progress toward addressing some of the Directives within the Required Actions made by the Special Review Team in this report.

## **Next Steps - Using and Acting on the Report**

A copy of this report is sent to the head of the institution. The institution shall use the report to guide its response to the findings and its improvement efforts. The institution is accountable for addressing the Required Actions identified in this report. Progress is expected to be evident through progress reports and Monitoring Reviews.

## **Closing Comments**

When there are problems concerning a board's failure to set policies that create effective practices and educational conditions, interventions are necessary. The External Review Team was charged with engaging in a systematic review of identified areas of concern and to conduct a structured on-site visit during which key stakeholders, including the Superintendent, the Board, central office staff, school-level personnel, community members and parents, were interviewed. Part of the Team's fact-finding efforts was to corroborate and triangulate stakeholder responses and determine through evidence the operational effectiveness in Franklin City Public Schools.

The importance of a quality education to the success of children cannot be overstated. Therefore, it is the responsibility of all stakeholders to take any necessary action to ensure that the quality of education is in the hands of those who are focused on and committed to students. The community must hold its elected and appointed leaders responsible for maintaining a focus on providing quality teaching and learning experiences for all students. The Board and the Superintendent must build and support continuity and trust among the schools' stakeholders and develop a collaborative culture to ensure that its business is conducted in an orderly and effective manner.

A public school system has a responsibility to its stakeholders to ensure that it has implemented quality programs, processes and resources that serve as a foundation for quality teaching and learning. Furthermore, the system should be engaged in an effective process of continuous improvement planning and have a quality assurance process in place to regularly assess and report effectiveness of planned improvements. Integral to the success of a

school system is effective Board of Education governance (that is, conducting the business of the system in alignment with its policies and procedures) and leadership in concert with the superintendent.

Upon receipt of the report it is incumbent upon the Board and the Superintendent of Franklin City Public Schools to act with speed and professionalism and address the Required Actions and Directives herein set forth.

# About AdvancED®

## Background

Dedicated to advancing excellence in education worldwide, AdvancED provides accreditation, research, and professional services to 30,000 institutions in more than 70 countries. AdvancED provides accreditation under the seals of the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI).

## The Accreditation Process

To earn and maintain accreditation, an institution must:

### 1. Meet the AdvancED Standards and accreditation policies.

Institutions demonstrate adherence to the AdvancED Standards/Indicators and accreditation policies, which describe the quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for educational institutions to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness.

### 2. Engage in continuous improvement.

Institutions implement a process of continuous improvement focused on improving student performance and organizational effectiveness.

### 3. Demonstrate quality assurance through internal and external review.

Institutions engage in a planned process of ongoing internal review and self-assessment. In addition, institutions host an External Review team at least once every five years. The team evaluates the institution's adherence to the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and policies, assesses the efficacy of the institution's improvement process and methods for quality assurance, and identifies Powerful Practices and provides Required Actions to help the institution improve. The institution acts on the team's Required Actions and submits an Accreditation Progress Report at prescribed intervals following the External Review. Monitoring Reviews may be conducted during this time to ensure that the institution is making progress toward the Required Actions.

## Special Reviews

At any point, a Special Review may be conducted in response to complaints or information about the institution and/or its system (district, board, or corporation) to determine adherence to the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and policies. The institution and/or its system must respond to the Required Actions of the Special Review Team. Monitoring Teams may be sent to the institution and/or its system at regular intervals to ensure that progress is being made toward the Special Review Team's Required Actions. Both Special Review Teams and Monitoring Teams are empowered to make accreditation recommendations based upon evidence obtained during said review.

## A Process of Continuous Improvement

The AdvancED accreditation process engages institutions in a continuous process of self-evaluation and improvement. The overall aim is to help institutions be the best they can be on behalf of the students they serve.

**VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION  
FRANKLIN CITY SCHOOL BOARD**

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
Goals and Expected Outcomes**

**Background**

The Standards of Quality (SOQ) 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.

...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](#)....

**Period of Enactment of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Franklin City School Board and the Virginia Board of Education will be in place until all schools are *Fully Accredited*. The MOU will be subject to annual review and revisions by the Virginia Board of Education.

For purposes of this MOU, the Franklin City School Board and the central office staff will adopt four key priorities and implement essential actions to comply with the Standards of Quality and improve student achievement.

1. Curricula Alignment
2. Human Resource Management and Quality of Leadership, Teachers and Support
3. Purpose and Direction
4. Leadership and Governance

### **Responsibilities of Franklin City School Board and Franklin City Public Schools**

The following are responsibilities of the Franklin City School Board and Franklin City Public Schools:

- 1. Curricula Alignment**
- 2. Human Resource Management and Quality of Leadership, Teachers and Support**
- 3. Purpose and Direction**
- 4. Leadership and Governance**

**The following are responsibilities of the Franklin City School Board and Franklin City Public Schools:**

1. The Franklin City School Board will provide the Superintendent of Public Instruction the names and credentials of its top three finalists to fill a vacancy of Division Superintendent or Interim Superintendent at least 3 business days prior to making an offer to the preferred candidate. The credentials of applicants must include experience in leading successful school and division turnaround efforts.
2. The Franklin City School Board will direct the Division Superintendent to consult with the Superintendent of Public Instruction or designee on all recommendations regarding instructional programs or instructional personnel prior to being submitted to the local board for approval. Recommendations regarding instructional programs must be submitted to the Superintendent of Public Instruction by the Division Superintendent no less than 10 business days prior to the local board meeting. Recommendations regarding instructional personnel must be submitted to the Superintendent of Public Instruction no less than 5 business days prior to the local board meeting. If the Franklin City School Board takes action on instructional programs or instructional personnel contrary to the recommendations of the Superintendent of Public Instruction or designee, the board will provide a written justification to the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
3. The Franklin City School Board will approve a corrective action plan for the essential actions identified in the MOU and submit this plan to the Virginia Board of Education for review and approval at a time to be determined by the Board of Education President and Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Franklin City School Board will show evidence that the plan was shared with stakeholders for feedback and this feedback was acted upon in the corrective action plan submitted to the Virginia Board of Education for approval.

4. The Franklin City School Board will direct the Division Superintendent to provide the local board weekly updates on the steps taken to complete the essential actions in the corrective action plan and submit a monthly update to the Virginia Department of Education.
5. The Franklin City School Board will direct the Division Superintendent, upon request, to provide the Virginia Department of Education documentation on planned uses and actual expenditures of state funds allocated to the division. The Department will review and approve planned uses and actual expenditures of federal funds.
6. The Franklin City School Board and the Division Superintendent will appear before the Virginia Board of Education, as requested, to provide reports and answer questions about the implementation of the MOU and corrective action plan.
7. The Franklin City School Board members and the Division Superintendent will participate annually in board and superintendent training, as required in the Standards of Quality § 22.1- 253.13:5.D, and provided by or in collaboration with the Department of Education. Training will be documented and sent to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.
8. The Franklin City School Board will permit the Superintendent of Public Instruction's designee to meet with the local board in an ex-officio, non-voting, member capacity should the division fail to have all of its schools *Fully Accredited* by the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year.

The following are responsibilities of the Virginia Board of Education and Department of Education:

1. The Superintendent of Public Instruction will assign a designee to serve as the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) to Franklin City Public Schools.
2. The Director of the Office of School Improvement (OSI) will coordinate with the CAO, lead turnaround partners assigned to the division, division staff, and other VDOE offices to provide technical assistance in support of the MOU and corrective action plan.
3. The CAO will provide administrative oversight over processes, procedures, and strategies that are implemented in support of the MOU and funded by targeted federal and state funds and will share feedback with both the Division Superintendent and the Franklin City School Board. Such oversight shall include the assignment of a consultant with human resources experience to work with the Division Superintendent and the CAO in ensuring that instructional personnel are appropriately credentialed.

4. The CAO, in consultation with the VDOE, will approve all federal funding regarding school improvement funds or Title I prior to being submitted for reimbursement at least monthly.
5. The CAO will work closely with the school and division personnel to implement instruction aligned to the Standards of Learning. The CAO will report monthly to the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Office of School Improvement on the steps taken by Franklin City Public Schools to implement the essential actions in the corrective action plan.

### School Division Essential Actions

The Franklin City School Board and central office staff will implement key priorities for improving student achievement related to the essential actions. The comprehensive nature of these actions will require the local board to focus its work on a few immediate priorities while making plans to implement actions that are more systemic over a longer period of time with input from the community.

#### Immediate Priority Actions:

The corrective action plan will include timelines that place immediate priority on essential actions that will have a direct impact on student achievement:

1. Curricula alignment
2. Quality of leadership, teachers and support

#### Systemic Planning Actions:

At the same time, the Franklin City School Board and the Division Superintendent must begin working on systemic governance and strategic planning issues:

1. Purpose and direction
2. Governance and leadership

An indication of whether each essential action should be considered an immediate priority or systemic actions over a longer period of time is indicated below:

| Immediate Priority or Systemic Planning | Number     | Essential Action  |
|---|------------|---|
|   | <b>1.0</b> | <b>Curricula Alignment</b>  |
| Immediate Priority                      | 1.1        | Provide staff development to all teachers on unpacking standards and aligning the written/taught/tested curriculum.   |
| Immediate Priority                      | 1.2        | Provide and document feedback from division administrators to principals regarding observed curriculum alignment and implementation of professional development during monthly division administrative classroom walk through observations. |
| Immediate Priority                      | 1.3        | Provide new/refresher training each year to school-level administrators on using the Formal Observation and Summative Teacher Evaluation  |

| Immediate Priority or Systemic Planning | Number     | Essential Action  |
|---|------------|---|
|   |            | tools to document evidence of curriculum alignment and the five components of the taught curriculum listed in the Academic Review Evaluation Tools.   |
| Immediate Priority                      | 1.4        | Monitor formal observation reports completed by school-based administrators for the incorporation of detailed and specific feedback regarding the quality and alignment of the instruction observed. Revise observation forms/templates if necessary.   |
| Immediate Priority                      | 1.5        | Develop a plan for revising division-level curriculum documents to address issues revealed through the Academic Review Process (alignment to content and cognitive level, alignment to VDOE blueprint, incorporation of specific learning activities and model assessments).  |
| Immediate Priority                      | 1.6        | Revise Formal Observation Form to reflect criteria in the Lesson Observation Evaluation Tool.   |
| Immediate Priority                      | 1.7        | Use results of the academic reviews in all schools to update required actions related to curricula alignment until all schools are <i>Fully Accredited</i> .  |
|   | <b>2.0</b> | <b>Human Resource Management and Quality of Leadership, Teachers and Support</b>  |
| Immediate Priority                      | 2.1        | Practice and/or procedures (or Board-approved policy) should be revised to ensure teacher contracts are not executed and employees do not begin work until Human Resources can certify licensure eligibility ensuring a valid license with the proper endorsements will be in full force for the ensuing or current school year. Additionally, all other required documents should be in place. |
| Immediate Priority                      | 2.2        | Ensure that all administrators (directors, supervisors, and specialists) who work with instructional programs at the division level and/or serve as a resource to teachers are endorsed in the area of responsibility.  |
| Immediate Priority                      | 2.3        | Substitute teachers (long-term or short-term) should operate under the permanent teacher's name and records in order to minimize confusion and errors. The status of only permanent teachers under contract should be considered as "Teachers of Record" on the Instructional Personnel and Licensure (IPAL) Verification Report.   |
| Systemic Planning                       | 2.4        | Consider the impact of supplemental duties on staff.  |
| Immediate Priority                      | 2.5        | Ensure that teachers are not teaching outside of their endorsement area.  |
| Systemic Planning                       | 2.6        | Consider aligning the speech pathologist and school psychologist to higher pay scales competitive with surrounding localities.  |
| Immediate Priority                      | 2.7        | School board policy states that sign-on bonuses are awarded to teachers meeting certain criteria ("...to full-time teachers new to the Division who meet the definition of "highly qualified" as  |

| Immediate Priority or Systemic Planning | Number     | Essential Action  |
|---|------------|---|
|   |            | defined by the federal “No Child Left Behind” legislation.”). Review policy to ensure the potential for securing the best qualified candidates in hard-to-staff positions and consider whether this is the most effective use of Title II funding. Human Resources will verify whether the awarding of sign-on bonuses remains within the guidelines of school board policy.  |
| Systemic Planning                       | 2.8        | All courses and sections taught should be considered as “equal value” or “importance” for IPAL reporting purposes. Schedules should not be designed to place lesser qualified teachers with courses during first semester with the idea that the IPAL Verification Report is submitted during second semester.  |
| Systemic Planning                       | 2.9        | Consider providing co-teaching settings for courses when properly endorsed personnel are limited. This would possibly allow larger class enrollments with two accessible teachers and/or the possibility of certain online courses which would potentially free up staff, even temporarily.   |
| Systemic Planning                       | 2.10       | Consider contracting with local community colleges, securing online programs and/or partnering with neighboring school divisions to provide instruction for courses when the division is unable to secure properly endorsed personnel.  |
|   | <b>3.0</b> | <b>Purpose and Direction</b>  |
| Systemic Planning                       | 3.1        | <p>Develop and implement a comprehensive, systematic process for establishing, reviewing and revising a clear purpose/direction for student achievement <b>for the school system</b>. The process must include participation by multiple stakeholder groups. The purpose/direction for the system must be reviewed and communicated on a regular basis, <i>pursuant to Code of Virginia, Section 22.1-253.13:6 (B) and Code of Virginia, Section 22.1-253.13: 6 (C)</i>.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Structure committees that have representation from various stakeholder groups to lead in the development/revision/update of the systemwide purpose and direction.</li> <li>b. Establish guidelines for committee work to ensure that the process is formalized and implemented with fidelity on a regular schedule.</li> <li>c. Devise a method of clear documentation of the process and a record of review and communication of the system’s purpose and direction.</li> </ol> |
| Systemic Planning                       | 3.2        | Develop and implement a comprehensive, systematic process for establishing, reviewing and revising a clear purpose/direction for student achievement <b>for each school in the system</b> . The process must include participation by multiple stakeholder groups. The purpose/direction for each entity must be reviewed and communicated on a regular basis, and the school’s purpose/direction must be aligned to the  |

| Immediate Priority or Systemic Planning | Number | Essential Action   |
|---|--------|--|
|   |        | <p>system's purpose/direction for student achievement, <i>pursuant to Code of Virginia, Section 22.1-253.13:6 (B) and Code of Virginia, Section 22.1- 253.13: 6 (C).</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Structure committees that have representation from various stakeholder groups to lead in the development/revision/update of each school's purpose/direction.</li> <li>b. Establish guidelines for committee work to ensure that the process is formalized and implemented with fidelity on a regular schedule.</li> <li>c. Devise a method of clear documentation of the process and a record of review and communication of each school's purpose and direction.</li> </ol>  |
| Immediate Priority                      | 3.3    | <p>Establish and commit to clear levels of accountability for school system and school leadership that result in challenging, equitable learning experiences for all students.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Review and revise, as necessary, job descriptions and actual job duties being performed by each central office position.</li> <li>b. Evaluate the job performance of each central office person on a regular basis to ensure there is accountability for and measurable evidence of supporting equitable and challenging educational programs for all students at each of the three schools.</li> <li>c. Evaluate the job performance of each school leader on a regular basis to ensure there is accountability for and measurable evidence of equitable and challenging learning experiences being implemented for all students.</li> <li>d. Analyze and use student achievement results, survey responses and all other available data as a means of holding system and school leadership accountable for effective professional practices that result in improved student achievement for all students. Document this accountability process publicly and on a consistent and regular basis.</li> </ol> |
| Immediate Priority                      | 3.4    | <p>Evaluate the overall quality of all instructional interventions that have been implemented to improve student, school and system performance.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Identify the various interventions and strategies being implemented. Develop and implement evaluation procedures for the interventions and strategies deployed to achieve improvement goals.</li> <li>b. Examine all supervisory and evaluation reports and use the results as one source to hold personnel accountable for improvements in student, school and system performance.</li> </ol>  |

| Immediate Priority or Systemic Planning | Number     | Essential Action   |
|---|------------|--|
|   | <b>4.0</b> | <b>Leadership and Governance</b>   |
| Systemic Planning                       | 4.1        | <p>Develop and implement a plan whereby the system’s updated policies and practices require and give direction for a systemwide professional growth plan for all staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Review and update all Board policies and practices to ensure clear direction and support to increase student achievement.</li> <li>b. Ensure that an annual comprehensive needs assessment, inclusive of professional growth needs for all staff, is conducted.</li> <li>c. Provide requirements and direction, through policies and practices, for the development and implementation of a systemwide professional development plan for all staff.</li> <li>d. Monitor, in both formative and summative ways, the implementation and impact of the systemwide professional development plan.</li> </ul>   |
| Immediate Priority                      | 4.2        | <p>Ensure that all activities of school board meetings comply with applicable state and federal law to include Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) citations, <i>Code of Virginia</i> and the Franklin City Public Schools Board Policy Manual.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Implement training opportunities for all board members to be trained in their roles and responsibilities and in state law, federal mandates, board policies, etc., regarding proper protocol for executive/closed sessions at board meetings.</li> <li>b. Restrict discussions and presentations in closed meetings to those items specifically allowed by law.</li> <li>c. Create open meeting reports of class, subject-area, grade-level and/or school-level performance data, pupil attendance, discipline and truancy data to be shared publicly on a routine basis.</li> <li>d. Establish and implement a formalized plan to ensure that all information regarding academic progress, Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments, benchmarks and the Lead Turnaround Partner program is routinely shared with internal and external stakeholders in a timely and open manner.</li> </ul> |
| Systemic Planning                       | 4.3        | <p>Involve all stakeholder groups in the development of a revised, comprehensive plan for the school system and ensure the communication of the revised plan, vision and purpose to all stakeholders.</p>  |

| Immediate Priority or Systemic Planning | Number | Essential Action  |
|---|--------|---|
|   |        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Utilize the committee as referenced in Essential Action 3.1, including 3.1 a.-c. and follow the same process to develop a Comprehensive Improvement Plan for Franklin City Schools.</li> <li>b. Schedule periodic review(s) of the Comprehensive Improvement Plan and involve stakeholder groups in the review process. Document evidence of the process and the extent of stakeholder involvement.</li> <li>c. Ensure that the Comprehensive Improvement Plan reflects the current reality of the system.</li> <li>d. Communicate in multiple ways in a timely manner the revised Comprehensive Improvement Plan and documented progress.</li> <li>e. Satisfy all public requests for information in a timely manner.</li> </ul>   |
| Systemic Planning                       | 4.4    | <p>Develop and implement a formal communication plan that is measurable and sustainable in order to ensure that school system information is shared with all stakeholders in a timely manner. Ensure that the communication plan is based on an expectation of shared responsibility for effective communication at all levels of the organization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Designate a staff member to take the leadership role in sharing information internally and externally regarding all aspects of the system in a timely manner and to lead the development of the communication plan.</li> <li>b. Organize a committee with various stakeholder representatives to develop the communication plan.</li> <li>c. Engage community and parent volunteers in meaningful roles that support student achievement.</li> <li>d. Provide training for all levels of the organization in effective communication strategies.</li> </ul> |
| Immediate Priority                      | 4.5    | <p>Implement supervision and evaluation processes consistently and regularly for all staff to improve professional practices and ensure student success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Review/update job descriptions of central office supervisory and support personnel and evaluate actual duties being performed.</li> <li>b. Realign/restructure positions to more effectively deploy critical resources to serve student needs.</li> <li>c. Review supervisory and evaluation processes for all employees and ensure procedures and timelines are being followed appropriately.</li> <li>d. Ensure that the results of the supervision and evaluation processes are analyzed and used to monitor effective teaching practices and improve student learning.</li> </ul>  |

The corrective action plan submitted to the VBOE for review and approval must establish the expected outcome data related to each essential action and must indicate whether the data will be reported monthly, quarterly, and annually to the local board. If additions to the plan are required by the Virginia Department of Education, the Division Superintendent will be notified.

The Division Superintendent will share with the local board any additions that are required.

### Authorizations

I (We) agree to work collaboratively to implement the requirements of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the purpose of improving student achievement in Franklin City Public Schools.

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|--|--|
| <p><b>Printed Name:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Title:</b> Chair, Franklin City School Board</p> <p><b>Signature:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Date:</b> _____</p>      | <p><b>Printed Name:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Title:</b> Superintendent, Franklin City Public Schools</p> <p><b>Signature:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Date:</b> _____</p> |
| <p><b>Printed Name:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Title:</b> President, Virginia Board of Education</p> <p><b>Signature:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Date:</b> _____</p> | <p><b>Printed Name:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Title:</b> Superintendent of Public Instruction</p> <p><b>Signature:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Date:</b> _____</p>         |