

Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item



Agenda Item: M

Date: April 24, 2014

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|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Title | Report on Effective Strategies for the School Improvement Process in Virginia | | |
| Presenter | Dr. Kathleen M. Smith, Director, Office of School Improvement | | |
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Purpose of Presentation:

For information only, no action required.

Previous Review or Action:

No previous review or action.

Action Requested:

No action requested.

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: This report summarizes the actions taken as part of the academic review process to support accountability for student learning. The Standards of Quality (SOQ) require the department to complete an academic review for schools that are not *Fully Accredited*.

Summary of Important Issues:

A report on effective school improvement strategies will be provided. The report includes a brief description of national research findings for low-performing schools, a description of the current academic review process employed in Virginia, a brief history of accreditation history in Virginia, a description of the partners that support Virginia's school improvement effort, and lessons learned in the school improvement process.

Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:

The academic review process is funded at \$767,070 for the 2013-2014 school year.

Timetable for Further Review/Action:

None

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Virginia Board of Education receive the report on effective strategies for the school improvement process in Virginia.

Report on Effective Strategies for the School Improvement Process in Virginia

**Dr. Kathleen Smith
Office of School Improvement
Virginia Department of Education**

National Perspective and Research on School Improvement

- Effective school leaders and teachers matter most in improving student achievement.
- Data must be **used** to change instruction.
- The context of the division leadership and practices are important to support the lowest-performing schools.

Effective Leaders and Teachers

- The abundance of literature of what works to improve low-performing schools shows that effective leaders and teachers matter most. See <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ies/ncee/wwc.html>

Data Use (not Data) Changes Instruction

- Data is anything that helps educators know more about their students.
- **Data use** is what educators **do** to draw meaning from data to inform and change practice.
- See REL Appalachia at <http://www.cna.org/centers/education/rel/>
- See www.waymandatause.com

Context of Division Leadership

- Research indicates that the context of the division leadership team and its practices are important to support the lowest-performing schools. See <http://centerforcsri.org>
- The context includes, but is not limited to, the size of the division. Small school divisions often have few central office staff but they have many of the same instructional responsibilities as larger divisions. Such responsibilities include preparing written curriculum guides.

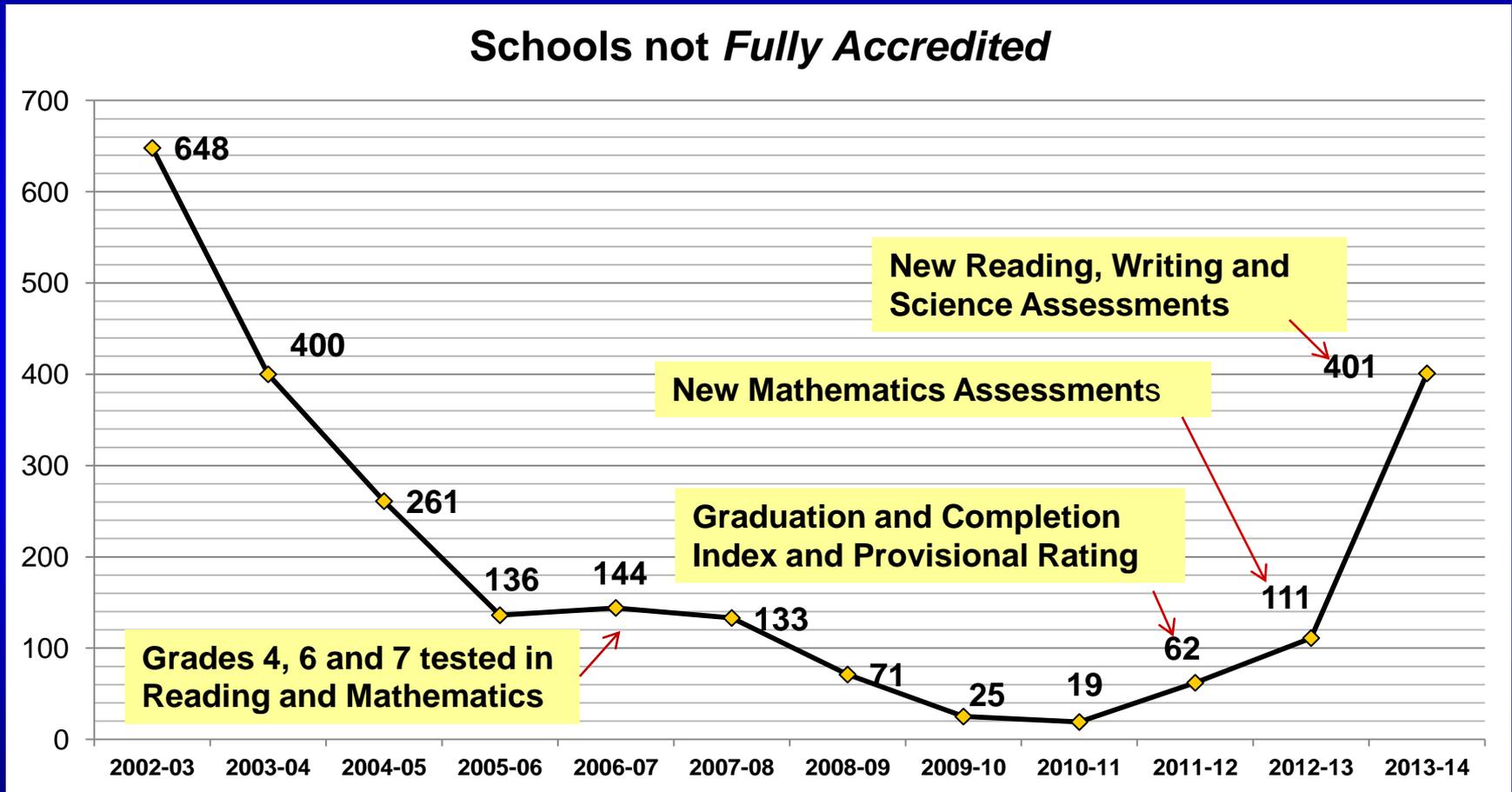
Additional Study from JLARC

- **The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) will complete a study examining the turnaround strategies for the lowest-performing schools in other states in June 2014.**

History of Schools Not *Fully Accredited* from 2002-2003 until 2013-2014

| Accreditation Year | Number of Schools Not <i>Fully Accredited</i> | Percentage of Schools Not <i>Fully Accredited</i> |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 2002-03 | 648 | 35% |
| 2003-04 | 400 | 3% |
| 2004-05 | 261 | 14% |
| 2005-06 | 136 | 7% |
| 2006-07 | 144 | 8% |
| 2007-08 | 133 | 7% |
| 2008-09 | 71 | 4% |
| 2009-10 | 25 | 1% |
| 2010-11 | 19 | 1% |
| 2011-12 | 62 | 3% |
| 2012-13 | 111 | 6% |
| 2013-14 | 401 | 22% |

History of Schools Not Fully Accredited from 2002-2003 until 2013-2014



Changes in the Focus of the Academic Review Process

- In 2005, the academic review process was revamped to move from conducting an academic review in each year of warning to conducting an academic review in the first year of warning and providing school support in subsequent years of warning.

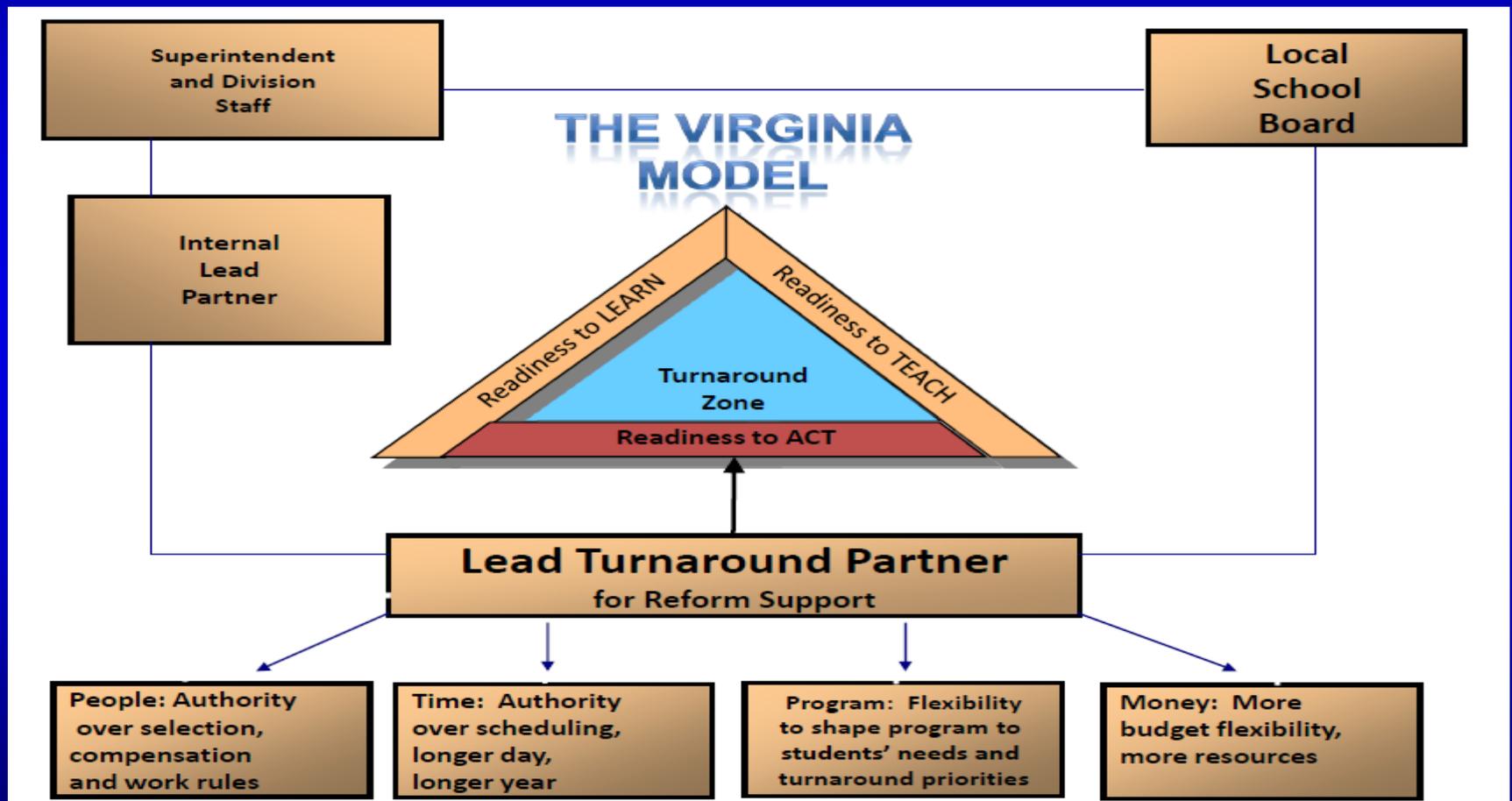
Changes in the Focus of the Academic Review Process

- In 2006, the Office of School Improvement (OSI) recognized that school support for the school was not enough to sustain reform efforts, and that division-level support – or shared governance with oversight from the division needed to be a critical factor in moving the lowest performing schools.

Changes in the Focus of the Academic Review Process

- In 2010, the first federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools were funded using the Lead Turnaround Partner (LTP) model. Schools denied accreditation and also SIG schools used the LTP model for their reform efforts. Thus, the USED Transformation Model became the basis for school improvement in the lowest-performing schools.

Virginia's Lead Turnaround Partner (LTP) MODEL Adapted from MassInsight for Schools in Accreditation Denied and/or School Improvement Grant (SIG) Status



Changes in the Focus of the Academic Review Process

- In 2011, a high school's accreditation included the Graduation Completion Index. The academic review process was changed to include the Virginia Early Warning System tool for those schools not *fully accredited* due to the graduation rate. This system was developed in partnership with the National High School Center and the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center.

Changes in the Focus of the Academic Review Process

- This system was developed in partnership with the National High School Center and the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center.
- The purpose of this tool is to identify ninth grade students who may not graduate on-time.

YEARS 1 – 3 OF THE ACADEMIC REVIEW PROCESS

Year 1 of Accredited with Warning or Provisionally Accredited- Graduation Rate Status

- **In the fall of the first year of warning, the Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE) Office of School Improvement (OSI) hires contractors to complete academic reviews and support schools in developing school improvement plans. Contractors work with multiple schools during the year as a part of the academic review process.**
- **Technical assistance from the VDOE follows in the spring based on differentiated need. This could include assistance in aligning curriculum in mathematics, English or other content areas as well as assistance with reviewing and using data to evaluate programs and strategies.**

Year 1 of Accredited with Warning or Provisionally Accredited- Graduation Rate Status

- **Data are reviewed by VDOE quarterly in meetings with the academic review contractors. Reports, including the academic review findings, are analyzed and progress reports are reviewed monthly.**

Year 1 of Accredited with Warning or Provisionally Accredited- Graduation Rate Status 2012-2013 and 2013-2014

| Type of School in Year 1 of Accredited with Warning/Provisionally Accredited – Graduation Rate Status | Number of Schools in 2012-2013 | Number of Schools in 2013-2014 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Elementary and Combined | 34 | 199 |
| Middle (highest grade - 8th) | 27 | 56 |
| High School (highest grade - 12th) | 11 | 56 |
| High School Provisional –Graduation Rate (highest grade – 12th) | 2 | 2 |

Year 2 of Accredited with Warning or Provisionally Accredited- Graduation Rate Status

- **In the second year of warning, a contractor is assigned to the school , and VDOE Office of School Improvement staff members assist and monitor the school. The contractor and OSI staff members review the school improvement plan and data provided by the school to determine what is working and what needs to be changed.**

Year 2 of Accredited with Warning or Provisionally Accredited- Graduation Rate Status

- **The VDOE team meets with the school team , and the plan is revised to include new strategies and assistance from the VDOE Office of School Improvement and other VDOE offices are deployed. This includes school visits, Web conferences, professional development, monthly data tracking, monthly analysis of reports from the contractors, and quarterly reviews of the school's improvement plan with the local academic review team.**
- **Programs of intervention the school has purchased, such as reading programs, are monitored by VDOE through a VDOE electronic data system.**

Year 2 of Accredited with Warning or Provisionally Accredited- Graduation Rate Status 2012-2013 and 2013-2014

| Type of School in Year 2 of <i>Accredited with Warning/Provisionally Accredited - Graduation Rate Status</i> | Number of Schools in 2012-2013 | Number of Schools in 2013-2014 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Elementary and Combined | 12 | 31 |
| Middle (highest grade – 8th) | 8 | 25 |
| High School (highest grade – 12th) | 11 | 16 |
| High School Provisional Graduation-Rate (highest grade 12th) | 4 | 0 |

Year 3 of Accredited with Warning or Provisionally Accredited- Graduation Rate and Conditionally Accredited Status

- **The technical assistance provided and the school's improvement plan are monitored monthly by the VDOE Office of School Improvement and the contractor for fidelity of implementation.**
- **Programs of intervention the school has purchased, such as reading programs, are monitored by VDOE through a VDOE electronic data system.**

Year 3 of Accredited with Warning or Provisionally Accredited-Graduation Rate and Conditionally Accredited Status 2012-2013 and 2013-2014

| Type of School in Year 3 of Accredited with Warning/Provisionally Accredited-Graduation Rate Status or Conditionally Accredited Status | Number of Schools AW/P-GR or Conditional 2012-2013 | Number of Schools AW/P-GR or Conditional 2013-2014 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Elementary and Combined | 1 Accredited with Warning 2 Conditional | 7 Accredited with Warning 1 Conditional |
| Middle (highest grade – 8th) | 1 Accredited with Warning 0 Conditional | 7 Accredited with Warning |
| High School (highest grade – 12th) | 0 Accredited with Warning 0 Conditional | 5 Accredited Warning |
| High School Provisional Graduation-Rate (highest grade 12th) | 0 Provisional-Graduate Rate | 1 -Provisional-Graduate Rate |

Denied Accreditation Status

- **In the fall of Year 4, the Virginia Board of Education and local school board develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) based on the needs of the school.**
- **Emphasis is placed on the division support provided to the school. If the school is also a Priority school, emphasis is placed on the role of the external Lead Turnaround Partner.**

Denied Accreditation Status

- **The schools and division are assigned a VDOE Office of School Improvement contractor to monitor the implementation of the MOU and to provide technical assistance to the division and the Lead Turnaround Partner, if a Priority school.**
- **The schools and division are assigned 2.5 full-time VDOE Office of School Improvement staff members who provide intensive technical assistance throughout the year.**

Denied Accreditation Status **2012-2013**

| Type of School in <i>Denied Accreditation</i> Status | Number of Schools 2012-2013 | Number of Schools 2013-2014 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Elementary and Combined | 2 | 3 |
| Middle (highest grade – 8th) | 2 | 3 |
| High School (highest grade – 12th) | 0 | 0 |
| High School Provisional (highest grade 12th) | 0 | 0 |
| Title I Focus (included in count above) | 1 | 1 |
| Title I and SIG Priority (included in count above) | 3 | 5 |

Focus of the Academic Review in 2013-2014

- In 2013-2014, due to new standards in reading, mathematics, and science, the focus of the academic review for those schools not *fully accredited* was focused on the alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum.
- The Office of School Improvement worked with 97 division- and school-level teams, and reviewed documents from over 403 schools to determine where areas of alignment did not occur.
- These documents included lesson plans, observation and feedback forms, unit assessments, curricula frameworks and other instructional documents.

Based on academic review findings in 2013-2014, support in 2014-2015 must be aligned to the first four *Uniform Performance Standards and Criteria for Evaluating Teachers*

Performance Standards

1. Professional Knowledge

The teacher demonstrates an understanding of the curriculum, subject content, and the developmental needs of students by providing relevant learning experiences.

2. Instructional Planning

The teacher plans using the Virginia Standards of Learning, the school's curriculum, effective strategies, resources, and data to meet the needs of all students.

Based on academic review findings in 2013-2014, support in 2014-2015 must be aligned to the first four *Uniform Performance Standards and Criteria for Evaluating Teachers*

Performance Standards

3. Instructional Delivery

The teacher effectively engages students in learning by using a variety of instructional strategies in order to meet individual learning needs.

4. Assessment of and for Student Learning

The teacher systematically gathers, analyzes, and uses all relevant data to measure student academic progress, guide instructional content and delivery methods, and provide timely feedback to both students and parents throughout the school year.

Lesson Observation and Teacher Performance Alignment

- **Technical assistance from the Office of School Improvement (OSI) will focus on efforts by the principal, reading specialists, mathematics specialists, and instructional coaches to support teachers in lesson plan development, delivery, and assessment in classrooms.**
- **Technical assistance will be provided in small groups by a core group of OSI contractors with an intensive instructional background.**

Virginia's Partners in the Work of Improving Schools

- **Since 2005-2006, the Office of School Improvement (OSI) has been working with partners to support its work with schools.**
- **Virginia collaborates with other entities to provide support to schools.**

The Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center (ARCC)

- The ARCC, at no cost, continues to bring a multitude of resources to Virginia to build the capacity of the divisions to support the lowest-performing schools.
- These resources include, but are not limited to, early warning systems development, USED content center support such as the Center on School Turnaround, formative assessment, and Focus school and Priority school technical assistance.

The Regional Education Laboratory (REL)

- The REL, at no cost, is currently working on a middle school initiative with 15 school divisions and 20 schools.
- The purpose of this initiative in 2013-2014 is to build a middle school early warning system tool similar to the high school early warning system tool as well as explore middle school literacy research.

The College of William and Mary

- The College of William and Mary (W and M) has supported the contractors working in focus schools, division staff in divisions with focus schools, and school staff in focus schools.
- In the upcoming year, the focus of W and M technical assistance will be to assist a group of principals with providing better feedback to teachers as part of the teacher observation process.
- Principals be identified for this initiative based on the findings of the academic review.

Virginia Foundation for Educational Leadership (VFEL)

- VFEL began supporting OSI in 2006-2007 in the area of leadership development when additional middle schools were identified as *accredited with warning*.
- VFEL, in partnership with the Department of Education, is currently providing intensive training to principals and division leaders through the Executive Development Program from the National Institute of School Leadership or NISL.
- This 28-day program is assisting divisions with building a pipeline of turnaround leaders, including principals to serve the lowest-performing schools.
- In January 2014, the first cohort of 23 Virginia educators completed the program. In addition to successfully completing the program, nine Virginia educators earned certification by the national office to present the NISL course throughout the commonwealth and nation.

The Center on Innovations in Learning - INDISTAR

- Since 2005, the OSI has been working with the Center on Innovations in Learning to provide a platform for school improvement planning and monitoring system.
- Indistar is aligned to the federal requirements of focus and priority schools.
- Currently, there are 115 school divisions and 561 active schools using this system on a regular basis.
- Many divisions have volunteered to use the platform.

The State Development Network (SDN) from MassInsight

- Virginia collaborates with a group of states through the SDN on the implementation of the USED turnaround models using MassInsight's Lead Turnaround Partner Model.
- This year's focus for the network included how to manage performance and accountability in these schools.
- As a result of this network, two turnaround offices in Norfolk City Public Schools and Richmond City Public Schools will be opened next year.
- SDN is providing the infrastructure and operational framework for these offices.

Corbett Education

- **New Priority schools (also *denied accreditation*) and returning *Priority* schools, division staff, and Lead Turnaround Partners (LTP) receive staff development from at least five times per year from Corbett Education, a leader in school turnaround.**
- **New *Priority* schools receive support in designing and developing the school's improvement plan and selecting a turnaround partner.**
- **Returning *Priority* schools receive technical assistance in critical areas to build sustainability of the reform efforts of the LTP.**

Six Lessons Learned: Lesson 1

- 1. Effective teachers and principal leaders matter most in the lowest-performing schools to raise student achievement. In low-performing schools, the goal is to increase the critical mass of effective teachers and leaders to a point where student achievement begins a steep trajectory upward.**

Six Lessons Learned: Lesson 2

2. In most schools being *Accredited with Warning* is enough to move the school to full accreditation in one to two years.

Six Lessons Learned: Lesson 3

- 3. Schools that are unable to meet the bar in two to three years are uniquely different from each other, and technical assistance strategies must be differentiated to meet those needs. Assistance also must include building capacity to sustain improvements.**

Six Lessons Learned: Lesson 4

4. **“On-the-ground” support almost daily from experienced turnaround leaders and a laser focus on implementing the turnaround plans with fidelity from the school board or principal are necessary conditions to raise student achievement in the lowest-performing schools.**

Six Lessons Learned: Lesson 5

5. Lead Turnaround Partners (LTPs) bring expertise to the table, but expertise without “on-the-ground” support almost daily from the LTPs in the first two years does not affect the change needed to raise student achievement. **There must also be** cooperation from the governing body or principal to support the recommendations of the LTP to move the school forward.

Six Lessons Learned: Lesson 6

6. Without state authority to make decisions about the selection and evaluation of school leadership and instructional personnel, curricula and instructional programs, time, and resources, state assistance becomes advisory. Current state statute limits what the Commonwealth can require of local school boards, especially in areas dealing with personnel—the key factor to student achievement.

Questions