



For Immediate Release
October 9, 2009

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Virginia Receives Federal Grant to Improve Reading Skills of Middle School Students

“Striving Readers” Focuses on Schools in Norfolk, Richmond & Roanoke

Struggling readers in eight Virginia middle schools will receive supplemental instruction through an initiative funded by a multi-year Striving Readers grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

The eight schools in three divisions were selected by the Virginia Department of Education to participate in the Virginia Striving Readers Intervention Initiative. The schools are as follows:

- Norfolk
 - Azalea Gardens Middle
 - Lake Taylor Middle
- Richmond
 - Thomas C. Boushall Middle
 - Lucille M. Brown Middle
- Roanoke
 - Addison Aerospace Magnet Middle
 - Breckinridge Middle
 - Stonewall Jackson Middle
 - Woodrow Wilson Middle

“These are schools that are making progress but still have significant numbers of students reading below grade level,” said Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright. “Through the Striving Readers grant, we hope to address the instructional needs of these students while learning more about effective programs to increase adolescent literacy.”

The participating schools selected Voyager Expanded Learning’s “Passport Reading Journeys” intervention program for the supplemental instruction. Groups of seventh-grade and eighth-grade students in the eight schools will receive supplemental instruction during the school day, beginning in 2010-2011. Follow-up awards totaling \$1.4 million annually will support supplemental instruction for struggling readers in the eight schools through 2012-2013 and the impact of the tutoring on reading achievement will be independently evaluated.

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan presented a ceremonial check in the amount of the first-year grant to Dr. Wright today during an appearance in Charlottesville. Virginia is one of eight states to share in \$6.6 million in first-year Striving Readers grants announced this fall. The program supports initiatives to raise literacy levels in schools with high percentages of economically disadvantaged students while building a scientific research base for efforts to increase adolescent literacy.

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