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VDOE Awards Data System-Enhancement Grants
Funded Projects Designed to Improve Teaching & Raise Achievement

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is awarding grants totaling nearly $2 million to 41 school divisions to expand the capacity of teachers and administrators to improve teaching and learning through data-driven decision making — and to help divisions meet and exceed new federal reporting requirements.

The funded projects include the creation of centralized data warehouses and information portals to allow educators and administrators to link data from multiple sources and create reports to identify the needs of students and teachers. All of the projects are consistent with the commonwealth's efforts to expand the capabilities of Virginia's nationally recognized longitudinal-data system while safeguarding student privacy.

"These grants will accelerate — especially in smaller school divisions — the development of data systems capable of providing detailed information educators and administrators must have to assess the instructional needs of students and plan professional development for teachers that is focused on raising achievement," said Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright.

Ten awards were made to individual school divisions and three grants went to partnerships comprising multiple divisions:
- Alexandria, Augusta County, Brunswick County, Campbell County, Charlotte County, Chesapeake, Fauquier County, Colonial Heights, Greensville County, Hampton, Louisa County, Mecklenburg County, Norfolk, Petersburg, Powhatan County, Prince George County, Richmond, Williamsburg-James City County — $771,489 to enhance data systems and warehousing capabilities and provide a business-intelligence tool for the analysis, reporting and presentation of data.
- Arlington County and Wise County — $89,770 to develop a data-management system and portal for teachers and administrators to access student-level data and aggregate local, state and national assessment data.
- Botetourt County, Buena Vista, King George County, Lancaster County, Middlesex County, Montgomery County, Orange County, Roanoke County, Rockbridge, Surry County, Westmoreland County — $448,554 to develop a data system and warehouse that consolidates assessment and other student data from multiple sources.
- Bristol — $75,000 to create a student-data system and warehouse and provide tools for teachers and administrators to track, analyze and report data.
- Charlottesville — $40,317 for a data-analysis and reporting tool compatible with the division's existing web-based, student-data system and warehouse.
- Clarke County — $63,670 for the development of a system to link, manage, analyze and report achievement data for students with Individual Education Programs.
- Floyd County — $75,000 for enhancements to the division's student-information management system to meet federal reporting requirements.

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- Goochland County — $75,000 for a web-based instructional system capable of delivering benchmark assessments and enhancements to the division's student-information management system.
- Nelson County — $75,000 for the purchase of a human resource-information system capable of connecting with the division's student-information system.
- Roanoke — $74,926 to develop an information portal allowing teachers and administrators to access and analyze student data from multiple sources and applications.
- Rockingham County — $65,459 to enhance the interface of the division's primary student-information system to extend functionality and allow access to and analysis of data in other systems.
- Smyth County — $74,995 to create a centralized data warehouse and develop a "dashboard" for the creation of reports on student achievement and educator effectiveness.
- Washington County — $53,464 to develop a data warehouse and portal allowing access to student and teacher data from a central location.

VDOE announced the grant competition last fall and submissions from school divisions were due by the end of February. Proposals were reviewed by a panel of independent information management and technology professionals.

Projects were selected for funding based on alignment with state and federal objectives, feasibility and technical merit, actual or potential benefit to multiple school divisions, detail and rationality of proposed budgets, involvement of stakeholder groups, and the strength of plans for measuring success.

The local awards are from a $17.5 million federal longitudinal-data systems grant the commonwealth received last year from the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF), which was established by the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

In accepting SFSF funding, the commonwealth and its school divisions agreed to comply with all of ARRA's accountability, transparency and reporting requirements. The 2009 federal legislation requires states and school divisions to:
- Provide information on student growth and achievement to teachers and principals;
- Report student-level transcript data (course enrollment and outcomes);
- Link student data with teachers responsible for their instruction; and
- Report data on teacher and principal evaluations and evaluation systems.

Ongoing VDOE activities supported by the 2010 grant are designed to meet ARRA requirements and expand the capability of the commonwealth's statewide longitudinal data system to provide educators and policymakers with high-quality data on the progress of students toward college and career readiness in Virginia's 1,884 public schools.

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