



**Virginia Department of Education  
Office of School Improvement  
Focus School Guide – Cohort 1**

**2013-2014**

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**Section 1:  
Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965  
(ESEA)  
Flexibility Waiver Information**

## Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 (ESEA) Flexibility Waiver Information

### Background

The U.S. Department of Education (USED) offered each state educational agency (SEA) the opportunity to request flexibility on behalf of itself, its local educational agencies (LEAs), and its schools, in order to better focus on improving student learning and increasing the quality of instruction. This voluntary opportunity will provide educators and state and local leaders with flexibility regarding specific requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive state-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction. This flexibility is intended to build on and support the significant state and local reform efforts already underway in critical areas such as transitioning to college- and career-ready standards and assessments; developing systems of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support; and evaluating and supporting teacher and principal effectiveness.

The *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA) Flexibility Waiver is intended to waive, with certain exceptions, any statutory or regulatory requirement of the ESEA for an SEA that receives funds under a program authorized by the ESEA. Under this flexibility, the USED has granted a waiver to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) through the 2013-2014 school year, after which time an extension of this flexibility may be requested.

For accountability purposes, Title I schools with one or more proficiency gap groups not meeting performance expectations in reading and mathematics will be considered for inclusion in the focus school category. Title I schools with one or more proficiency gap groups failing to meet the 95 percent participation rate in reading and/or mathematics will also be considered for inclusion in the focus school category.

- **Gap Group 1:** Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners (ELL), and Economically Disadvantaged (unduplicated)
- **Gap Group 2:** Black students, not of Hispanic origin, including Students with Disabilities, ELL, and Economically Disadvantaged Students
- **Gap Group 3:** Hispanic students, of one or more races, including Students with Disabilities, ELL, and Economically Disadvantaged Students

### **Methodology for Identifying Focus Schools**

The methodology to determine a list of Title I focus schools that do not meet the participation rate and have the largest proficiency gaps is described below:

1. Exclude any schools identified as priority schools.
2. Automatically identify any school not meeting the participation rate of 95 percent in reading and/or mathematics.
3. For the remaining schools, calculate for each school the difference between the annual

measurable objective (AMO) target and each gap group’s performance in reading and mathematics to determine proficiency gap points.

4. Exclude from each school’s calculation any gap group that meets or exceeds the AMO target.
5. Sum of the proficiency gap points in reading and mathematics and divide by the number of gap groups that did not meet the AMO target(s).
6. Rank schools in order of the total number of average proficiency gap points.
7. Identify from the list of schools ranked by proficiency gap points a number equal to 10 percent of the state’s total Title I schools (72 schools).

*Note: Once identified as a focus school, a school will be expected to implement interventions for a minimum of two consecutive years, with the support of a state-approved contractor, regardless of whether the school is identified as a focus school in the second year of implementing intervention strategies.*

**Focus School Requirements**

Once identified, focus schools and their respective divisions will be required to implement a series of interventions to address the needs of underperforming gap groups.

	Division	School
<b>Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with an external VDOE contractor and participate in a needs sensing interview</li> <li>• Convene a division leadership team including representatives of:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Title I</li> <li>○ Instruction</li> <li>○ Special education</li> <li>○ English language learners</li> <li>○ Principals of each focus school</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Meet as a division leadership team monthly</li> <li>• Develop, implement, and monitor a division improvement plan that is aligned with the needs of each focus school</li> <li>• Participate in quarterly meetings with focus schools to review data and make decisions about needed technical assistance</li> <li>• Modify division improvement plan quarterly based on data analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convene a school leadership team including a member of the division leadership team</li> <li>• Utilize a VDOE-approved adaptive reading assessment program to determine student growth, at least quarterly</li> <li>• Utilize the <i>Algebra Readiness Diagnostic Test (ARDT)</i> provided by the VDOE (<i>required only for focus schools with grade 5 or higher</i>)</li> <li>• Develop, implement, and monitor a school improvement plan</li> <li>• Develop an intervention strategy for all students who failed a Standards of Learning (SOL) assessment or failed to meet the fall Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) intervention (K-3) benchmark</li> <li>• Regularly analyze a variety of data points to make strategic, data-driven decisions, and implement the needed interventions for identified students</li> <li>• Modify school improvement plan quarterly based on data analysis</li> </ul>

A checklist containing tasks and due dates related to the aforementioned requirements may be found in Appendix A.

On a quarterly basis, the VDOE-assigned division liaison will submit a report to the OSI and the division superintendent documenting the LEA's compliance with the MOU provisions.

Information regarding requirements for focus schools may be found at:  
[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school\\_improvement/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/index.shtml)

**The OSI contact person for focus schools is Dr. Yvonne A. Holloman who may be reached at (804) 225-2064 or [Yvonne.Holloman@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Yvonne.Holloman@doe.virginia.gov) .**



# **Section 2: Division-Level and School-Level Teams**

## Division-level and School-level Teams

Virginia emphasizes the participation and continuous involvement of division-level administrators in the school improvement process as well as targeted interventions at the school-level for students at risk for not passing a grade-level assessment including students with disabilities and ELL. In Virginia's school improvement process, the state works directly with division-level staff to ensure processes are in place to support the improvement of schools (the state builds capacity at the division level), and then supports the division in working with its schools to ensure improvement is achieved for all students (the division builds capacity at the school level).

Each division with identified focus schools will be assigned a **division liaison** to facilitate division strategies to support focus school(s) to develop interventions for students who are at risk of not passing a state assessment in reading or mathematics including students with disabilities and ELL.

The VDOE contractor (division liaison) will:

- Conduct a needs sensing interview with the division leadership team to gather baseline data to determine the level of support needed from the SEA;
- Provide leadership and teacher professional development focused on what evidence to look for when observing classrooms; coaching for literacy and mathematics; effective modeling practices; planning based on classroom observations; research-based intervention practices; and, response to intervention;
- Provide implementation support and coaching throughout the year for principals and teachers;
- Model effective practices and provide guided practice until practices are in place independently of the contractor;
- Provide modeling to principals in providing feedback to teachers, and provide guided practice to principals until the principal is able to exhibit practices independently;
- Build the division's capacity to support low-performing schools and increase student achievement;
- Meet at least quarterly with VDOE staff to share common issues across the state and discuss strategies for addressing emerging issues in the field; and
- Submit a quarterly audit report to document a school division's compliance with the ESEA Flexibility Waiver requirements for focus schools.

Division liaisons will conduct an introductory meeting in late September with the division superintendent to share information regarding the ESEA Flexibility Waiver requirements for LEAs with focus schools.

## VDOE Change Map for Capacity Building

Through collaboration with representatives from various VDOE offices as well as partnering organizations, the change map was developed in August 2011 based on the following **theory of action**:

*Effective school divisions demonstrate the ability to continuously improve, adhere to a vision, maximize student learning, provide strong leadership, offer high quality instruction, and conduct relevant professional development. The school division leadership team cultivates a culture of capacity-building and continuous improvement. The school division consistently adheres to a vision that drives strategic planning and subsequent actions (**strategic planning**). The school board and superintendent intentionally organize the division to maximize student learning (**system organization**). Leaders are proactive and intentional, and allocate resources to achieve the vision. Leaders model systemic thinking by communicating and making transparent decisions (**leadership**). Leaders continuously align curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Leaders implement and monitor differentiated, research-based instruction, and services provided to meet diverse student needs (**curriculum, instructional practices, and services**). The school division provides and assesses the effectiveness of professional development that is needs-based and job-embedded (**professional development**). Evidence-based, tiered support programming is provided to students; multiple sources of data, gathered from regular and intentional student progress monitoring, are used to develop programming that includes a continuum of support options for students (**student support systems**).*

## Needs Sensing Interview

***Due to the new Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments in reading and mathematics, data indicate that a curriculum audit is needed. For this reason, the needs sensing interview will not be completed in 2013-2014. The division will be required to send a division team to training for one day between October 22-24, 2013 at locations to be determined by the Office of School Improvement. The curriculum audit will be completed in November 2013 by a VDOE contractor, the division, and school team. The information included below regarding the needs sensing interview is intended for informational purposes only.***

Following the introductory meeting with the division superintendents, the division liaison will conduct needs sensing interviews with division leadership teams using the *VDOE Change Map for Capacity Building* which determines the level of support needed to affect change at the division level based upon the following components of the school improvement theory of action:

- Strategic planning;
- System organization;
- Leadership;
- Curriculum, instructional practices, and services (including targeted interventions for students with disabilities and ELL);
- Professional development (including developing research-based teacher evaluation systems that support teacher improvement and effectiveness); and

- Student support systems.

Information gleaned from the needs sensing interview will be used to determine whether a division is operating at the *exploration, emerging, full, or sustainability* level of implementation for each theory of action component. The level of assistance may change during the course of the school year based on data. The interview will enable the division to engage in reflective practice by identifying specific needs at both the division and school levels.

### **Division-level Teams**

The division will be required to convene a division team comprised of administrators or other key staff representing Title I, instruction, special education, ELL, and the principal of each focus school. Using the results of the needs sensing interview, the division team will be tasked with developing, implementing, and monitoring the division improvement plan using the Center on Innovation & Improvement (CII) Web-based planning tool, Indistar<sup>®</sup>. The Indistar<sup>®</sup> tool includes division-level indicators that are aligned with rapid improvement school indicators. These research-based indicators will serve as the foundation for the support needed to implement strategies to reduce proficiency gaps and create full division-level sustainability for reform efforts. Additional information regarding the Indistar<sup>®</sup> Web-based planning tool is included in Section 3 of the manual.

### **School-level Teams**

Each focus school will be required to convene a school team comprised of teachers and other key staff representing Title I, instruction, special education, and ELL. Using the results of the formative and summative assessments, the school team will be tasked with developing, implementing, and monitoring the school improvement plan using the CII Web-based planning tool, Indistar<sup>®</sup>. The Indistar<sup>®</sup> tool includes rapid improvement school indicators. These research-based indicators will serve as the foundation for continuous improvement efforts. Additional information regarding the Indistar<sup>®</sup> Web-based planning tool is included in Section 3 of the manual.

### **Quarterly Review of Data**

Identified focus schools must develop an intervention strategy for all students who failed an SOL assessment in the past or are identified as below grade level on the PALS (K-3). Each focus school will be required to regularly analyze a variety of data points to make strategic, data-driven decisions to implement needed interventions for identified students including students with disabilities and ELL. Analysis of the data points from these reports will be used by school improvement teams each quarter to adjust school- and division-level improvement plans to address emerging needs of the focus school(s). Figure 1 illustrates how collaboration among the school, the LEA, and the division liaison will result in continuous improvement.

**Data** --Collect formative and summative data on a quarterly basis

**Discussions** --Analyze data during quarterly meetings between school and division teams

**Decisions** --Make decisions about needed modifications to school and division improvement plans

Figure 1

**DataCation by CaseNex**, an electronic query system that provides principals with data needed to make data-driven decisions at the school level. Each focus and priority school will be required to analyze a variety of data points on a quarterly basis using the *Virginia Dashboard*, a Web-based data analysis and reporting tool. School and division teams will use the tool to make strategic, data-driven decisions to implement needed interventions for students who: 1) are not meeting expected growth measures; 2) are at risk of failure; or 3) at risk of dropping out of school. In addition, the *Virginia Dashboard* allows the school leadership team to follow interventions throughout the year to determine their effectiveness. The *Virginia Dashboard* generates monthly reports which include, at a minimum, the following forms of data:

- Student attendance;
- Teacher attendance;
- Benchmark results;
- Reading and mathematics grades;
- Student discipline reports;
- Student transfer data; and
- Student intervention participation by intervention type.

Analysis of the data points from the quarterly reporting system will be used by school teams each quarter, and if needed, monthly, to update the school improvement plan.

### **Protocol for Reviewing Quarterly Data**

At the conclusion of each marking period, school- and division-level teams will review a variety of data points, and use the information to evaluate the efficacy of the improvement plan strategies. To this end, the following protocol should be helpful to division leadership teams and their focus schools as they review quarterly data.

**Step 1: At the end of each marking period, focus schools will complete a quarterly report or generate a data report using one of the options included below:**

- DataCation Reporting Tool
- Other data reporting tool as determined by the LEA and **approved** by the OSI

Note: To obtain approval regarding the selected quarterly data reporting tool, the focus school principal should submit the *Data System Approval Form* via the Indistar® Dashboard no later than **September 20, 2013**. A copy of the form may be found in Appendix B.

**Step 2: The division leadership team meets with the building principal to discuss the quarterly data.**

- The following agenda items **must** be included as a part of the discussion:
  - Review of strategies and data analysis for students who are **at risk of failing a reading or mathematics SOL**;
  - Review of strategies and data analysis for students who have been identified for **Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) intervention (K-3)**, if applicable;
  - Review of strategies and data analysis for students who **failed the SOL reading or mathematics assessment in 2012-2013**;
  - Review of strategies and data analysis for students who are **below grade level in reading or mathematics based on a disability**;
  - Review of division's Indistar® improvement plan; and
  - Updates needed to the **school- and division-level** Indistar® improvement plans
- Minutes from this meeting, including the aforementioned agenda items, are required to be entered onto the Indistar® Web site. The meeting minutes should include **decisions** made as a result of discussions regarding the quarterly data.
- The school AND division improvement plans should be revised, as needed, based on discussions about the identified needs.

### **45-Day Pre-SOL Plans**

The **45-Day Standards of Learning (SOL) Instructional Plan** provides schools with a clear plan of action for the time from the end of the third marking period until the beginning of the SOL testing period. The purpose of the plan is to indicate the strategies that will be implemented during the 45-day period preceding SOL testing to:

- Ensure that the SOL blueprints are used to direct the planning of instruction for SOL objectives that require re-teaching or have not been taught.
- Ensure that the SOL blueprints are used to direct remediation efforts for students who have not mastered SOL objectives.
- Emphasize the priority needed by everyone in the building to ensure that "all hands are on deck" to support increased student achievement.

The plan should be **no more than three pages** in length, and be developed with input from instructional personnel. Each principal may opt to develop a format to meet the needs of his/her school. In addition, the principal should review the plan with all teachers in the building prior to spring break so that implementation may begin no later than the first day of return to school. The 45-Day Pre-SOL Plan is **optional** for focus schools unless the division liaison makes it a requirement. A sample template may be found in Appendix C.



## **Section 3: Indistar<sup>®</sup> Web-based Planning Tool**

## Indistar® Web-based Planning Tool

Indistar® is a Web-based planning tool that guides a division or school team in charting its improvement and managing the continuous improvement process. Indistar® is premised on the firm belief that division and school improvement is best accomplished when directed by the people closest to the students. While the state provides a framework for the process, each division team and school team applies its own ingenuity to achieve the results it desires for its students.

Providing a division or school team with an improvement process that encourages local ingenuity and responsibility changes the dynamic between localities and the state. It also requires a “culture of candor” in which division and school personnel talk openly and honestly about their professional practices that contribute to student learning. When reports are electronically submitted to the state, there is no premium for “the right answer.” The right answer is the one the local team determines will bring the division or school to the highest level of professional performance for the benefit of students. Placing this high level of confidence in the ability of division and school personnel to chart their own course also requires that the division or school team is given convenient access to tools, resources, and effective practice to get the job done.

Indistar® includes *Wise Ways* research briefs to support its indicators of effective practice. Also, Indistar® provides *Indicators in Action* video modules demonstrating the practices, and the technology for capacity builders to coach the teams in real time. Indistar® enables coaches to assist the teams with coaching comments about the team’s ongoing work.

The Indistar® Web-based tool assists school- and division-level teams with **assessing, planning, implementing,** and **monitoring** progress toward accomplishing the rapid improvement indicators (school-level teams) or district improvement indicators (division-level teams).

The six-step process includes:

- **Step 1: Register school/division**  
A division contact person who also serves as a member of the leadership team will register both the schools and division on the Indistar® Web site at [www.indistar.org](http://www.indistar.org). Process managers must be appointed by school- and division-level teams to guide their work within the tool such as entering data and other information.
- **Step 2: Provide school/division information**  
Use of data to make decisions about improvement planning is an essential component of improvement planning. Step 2 of the process requires school- and division-level teams to enter aggregate information regarding student ethnicity, attendance, mobility, and disability. In addition, teams may enter formative and summative data throughout the duration of the plan related to their needs and action steps.
- **Step 3: Form school/division team**  
Improvement planning requires participation of a variety of internal and external stakeholders. To this end, school- and division-level teams will enter information regarding each member. This information will be used continuously throughout the process to identify parties responsible for specific tasks and to monitor attendance at improvement team meetings.
- **Step 4: Assess school/division improvement indicators**

Indistar® emphasizes indicators of effective practice based on concrete, behavioral expressions of professional practices that research demonstrates contribute to student performance. School- and division-level teams will use a variety of data points to select the appropriate indicators that address the issues affecting achievement. The selected indicators will be assessed individually using a rating of *fully, limited, or no implementation*.

- **Step 5: Create school/division plan**

Based on the indicator assessment results, school- and division-level teams will create a series of tasks associated with each selected indicator. The tasks will serve as a “road map” for executing the indicators by identifying action steps for specific stakeholders.

- **Step 6: Monitor school/division plan**

Monitoring is an essential component of improvement planning as it allows teams to evaluate the efficacy of tasks that were developed. The continuous improvement process enables teams to review their work and make the necessary adjustments to the plan throughout the school year. In addition, data points emphasized in Step 2 of the process will be used to determine the effectiveness of interventions.

School and division teams will view pre-recorded videos regarding use of the Indistar® Web-based planning tool. The pre-recorded videos and additional information about the planning tool are posted on the VDOE website at:

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school\\_improvement/indistar/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/indistar/index.shtml)

The development, implementation, and monitoring of improvement plans involve a laser-like focus on the nexus between strategies and data. To this end, focus schools and their respective divisions will review data on a consistent basis to determine the effectiveness of strategies embedded within their plans. The Indistar® Web-based planning tool in combination with quarterly review of data will provide teams with *tools* to affect change at both the school and division level. The following questions, developed by Edie Holcomb, represent the phases or stages of the school improvement process, and will serve as the foundation of the process:

1. ***Where are we now?*** What caused your school to be identified as a focus school?
2. ***Where do we want to go?*** What rapid improvement school/district improvement indicators will be selected?
3. ***How will we get there?*** What strategies (tasks) will be developed to support the selected indicators?
4. ***How will we know we are (getting) there?*** What quarterly data will your team review?
5. ***How will we sustain focus and momentum?*** How will your team use the quarterly data to modify your strategies (tasks)?

## Protocol for Monitoring Improvement Plans

The ESEA Flexibility Waiver provisions require division leadership teams to take an *active* role in providing technical assistance to the focus schools. Aligned division and school improvement plans will be critical to the process. Throughout the school year, improvement plans should be implemented, monitored, and revised as a result of continuous data analysis.

The following protocol will assist division leadership teams as they monitor school- and division-level plans.

### Step 1: Review the division's improvement plan for alignment of district improvement indicators with the rapid improvement school indicators.

- The division's indicators must support the indicators selected by each focus school. In Figure 2, you will see evidence that the division leadership team selected an indicator (IA13) to support the school.

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "Monitor Action Plan - Windows Internet Explorer provided by Virginia IT Partnership". The URL is <http://www.centeri.org/SchoolRestructuring/DistrictActionPlanMonitor.aspx>. The page displays the "Virginia Monitor District Plan" for "VA-test District".

**Indicator selected by the division leadership team** (Callout box 1) points to the indicator details:

- Indicator: **IA13** [View Info &](#)
- Objective: **The district will work with the school to provide early and intensive intervention for students not making progress. (13)**
- STEP 4 - INFORMATION**  
Level of Development or Implementation: *Limited Development*  
Priority Score: **3**  
Opportunity Score: **2**  
Current level description: *The Happy Hills School Division does not currently have a process in place to provide central support to schools that are in improvement.*
- STEP 5 - INFORMATION**  
Describe how it will look when this objective is being fully met in your School:  
*Each school will have a division intervention plan (DIP) that is implemented to address student deficiencies as identified on formative and summative assessments.*
- Assigned to: **Jane Doe** Objective Target Date: **11/30/2011**

**Comments entered by the division leadership team regarding alignment of the selected indicator with the schools' indicators.** (Callout box 2) points to the comments section in the "Update or Complete Task Status" form:

Task: 2 Based on classroom observation data and common formative assessment data, the division intervention monitors and the building principals of Timmons Elementary, Johnston Elementary, and Heart Elementary will develop reading and/or math professional development groups for selected teachers. These groups will participate in intensive training with the Happy Hills reading and/or math specialists on the first Wednesday of each month.

Comments: Following the sessions, teachers will conduct peer observations and receive feedback from their peers, principals, and reading and/or math specialists. This task is associated with indicator IF01 from the Heart Elementary improvement plan, indicators IF01 and IF02 from the ~~Timmons~~ Timmons Elementary school improvement plan, and indicators IF04 and IF07 from the Johnston Elementary school improvement plan.

Completed date:  Save / Update Cancel Delete this task

Figure 2

**Step 2: Review the division’s/school’s improvement plan for evidence of consistent monitoring of the tasks developed for each district/rapid improvement indicator.**

- Each comment should include a date, and clearly describe the status of the task. Is it evident from the status comments that the task has been implemented? Is the task/strategy successful? How do you know? In Figure 3, you will see evidence of consistent monitoring of a task by the division/school leadership team.



Figure 3

**Step 3: Meeting minutes and agendas should be posted on a monthly basis, and contain information regarding decisions made by the division/school leadership team.**

**The division leadership team is responsible for monitoring improvement plans for each focus school.** One person from the division leadership team must be assigned to serve as a member of the school improvement team for each focus school. Monitoring activities include reviewing status comments, agendas, and meeting minutes. In addition, the assigned division leadership team member will be responsible for entering monthly coaching comments regarding the focus school’s improvement plan.



## **Section 4: Improvement Planning and Quarterly Data**

## Improvement Planning and Quarterly Data

The use of data to support a school improvement plan should be an intentional and seamless process with the purpose of evaluating the efficacy of strategies implemented during a given marking period.

**Step 1: School improvement teams will develop Indistar® improvement plans that include tasks associated with rapid improvement school indicators based on identified needs.**

- Schools will include between 5-6 rapid improvement school indicators in their improvement plan. Each indicator will have a series of tasks developed which sequence the steps involved in making the indicator a reality at the school.
- Tasks should be developed to address strategies for improving the performance of the following groups of students:
  - At risk of failing a reading or mathematics SOL assessment
  - Identified for PALS intervention (K-3), if applicable
  - Failed the SOL reading or mathematics assessment in 2012-2013
  - Below grade level in reading and/or mathematics based on a disability
- Each selected rapid improvement school indicator should include **at least one task** related to student data. This task will be evaluated quarterly. Student data may include:
  - Attendance
  - Mathematics, English, science, and social studies grades
  - Mathematics, English, science, and history formative assessment results
  - In-school and out of school suspensions
  - Discipline referrals
- Other data points may also be used such as:
  - Teacher attendance
  - Number of parent conferences
  - Number of classroom observations/instructional walkthroughs
  - Number of students transferring in and/or out of the school

Example:

***IID11: Instructional Teams will review the results of unit pre-/post-tests to make decisions about the curriculum and instructional plans and to "red flag" students in need of intervention (both students in need of tutoring or extra help and students needing enhanced learning opportunities because of their early mastery of objectives).***

***Tasks:***

- 1) The Happy Hills Division Assessment Specialist will provide a series of formative assessment workshops regarding the development and use of unit pre- and post-tests in reading on the first and second Monday of each month (November 2011 – January 2012).
- 2) Instructional teams will meet for an extended planning block (4 hours) on the fourth week of each month (January 2012-September 2012) to develop unit pre- and post-tests in reading. Meeting schedule: Monday (K-1<sup>st</sup>); Tuesday (2<sup>nd</sup>); Wednesday (3<sup>rd</sup>); Thursday (4<sup>th</sup>); Friday (5<sup>th</sup>)
- 3) On a monthly basis, the Happy Hills Elementary lead reading teacher and the Title I reading specialist will review unit pre- and post-tests developed by the instructional teams and provide feedback.
- 4) Instructional teams will administer unit pre- and post-tests (**Super Reader Assessments**) to students before and after units of instruction in reading. They will meet during their common planning time to disaggregate the data and assign students to the appropriate intervention groups for reading instruction.

**Step 2: School improvement teams will implement and monitor the plan throughout the marking period.**

- Comments regarding the status of each task should be entered into Step 6 on a regular basis (at least monthly).
- Any relevant formative data may be entered into Step 2 (School Assessment Scores) or uploaded to the Indistar® Dashboard (schools may upload a maximum of 20 files).

Example:

***IID11: Instructional Teams will review the results of unit pre-/post-tests to make decisions about the curriculum and instructional plans and to "red flag" students in need of intervention (both students in need of tutoring or extra help and students needing enhanced learning opportunities because of their early mastery of objectives).***

***Task #4:*** Instructional teams will administer unit pre- and post-tests (***Super Reader Assessments***) to students before and after units of instruction in reading. They will meet during their common planning time to disaggregate the data and assign students to the appropriate intervention groups for reading instruction.

***Comments:***

***This task will be evaluated using the Super Reader Assessment information.***

**September 23, 2012** – Instructional teams have begun meeting for half-day planning sessions. They have completed units of instruction with assistance of the lead teachers. Third grade teachers requested additional sessions with Ms. Happy to design intervention lessons using the PALS intervention information to address fluency concerns.

**October 28, 2012** – The administrators reviewed samples of the unit pre- and post-tests as well as the results with individual teachers during post-observation conferences. Third grade reading intervention students (53%) scored less than 80% on the Super Reader post-tests; fifth grade reading intervention students (68%) scored less than 80%. During the week of October 7, 2012, instructional walkthroughs were conducted to determine the level of implementation of intervention lessons based on the unit pre- and post-test data. Additional assistance is needed in second, third, and fifth grade. Ms. Happy will meet with the grade-level teams during their planning time.

**Step 3: At the end of each marking period, school improvement teams will use student data to evaluate the quarterly status of tasks included in their improvement plan.**

- Comments regarding the status of tasks based on the quarterly data should be entered into Step 6 with a notation of the quarterly status. **After entering the quarterly status, the team will submit the improvement plan via the Indistar® Dashboard.**

Example:

***IID11: Instructional Teams will review the results of unit pre-/post-tests to make decisions about the curriculum and instructional plans and to "red flag" students in need of intervention (both students in need of tutoring or extra help and students needing enhanced learning opportunities because of their early mastery of objectives).***

***Task #4:** Instructional teams will administer unit pre- and post-tests (**Super Reader Assessments**) to students before and after units of instruction in reading. They will meet during their common planning time to disaggregate the data and assign students to the appropriate intervention groups for reading instruction.*

***Comments:**  
**This task will be evaluated using the Super Reader Assessment information.***

***September 23, 2012** – Instructional teams have begun meeting for half-day planning sessions. They have completed units of instruction with assistance of the lead teachers. Third grade teachers requested additional sessions with Ms. Happy to design intervention lessons using the PALS intervention information to address fluency concerns.*

***October 28, 2012** – The administrators reviewed samples of the unit pre- and post-tests as well as the results with individual teachers during post-observation conferences. Third grade reading intervention students (53%) scored less than 80% on the Super Reader post-tests; fifth grade reading intervention students (68%) scored less than 80%. During the week of October 7, 2012, instructional walkthroughs were conducted to determine the level of implementation of intervention lessons based on the unit pre- and post-test data. Additional assistance is needed in second, third, and fifth grade. Ms. Happy will meet with the grade-level teams during their planning time.*

***November 30, 2012 (Quarterly Data Review)** – Based on an analysis of the quarterly Super Reader post-test results, 52% of second grade intervention students, 44% of third grade intervention students, 71% of fourth grade intervention students, and 21% of fifth grade intervention students earned a score of 80% or better. Based on these data, the school will.....*

**Step 4: The division leadership team will meet with the building principal to discuss the quarterly data related to specific rapid improvement school indicators and tasks.**

- The following agenda items **must** be included as a part of the discussion:
  - Review of strategies and data analysis for students who are **at risk of failing a reading or mathematics SOL**;
  - Review of strategies and data analysis for students who have been identified for **PALS intervention (K-3)**, if applicable;
  - Review of strategies and data analysis for students who **failed the SOL reading or mathematics assessment in 2012-2013**;
  - Review of strategies and data analysis for students who are **below grade-level in reading or mathematics based on a disability**;
  - Review of division’s Indistar® improvement plan; and
  - Updates needed to the division’s Indistar® improvement plan

**Step 5: Minutes from this meeting, including the aforementioned agenda items, are required to be entered onto the Indistar® Web site. The meeting minutes should include *decisions* made as a result of discussions regarding the quarterly data.**

- The school AND division improvement plans should be revised, as needed, based on discussions about the identified needs.

Example:

**Happy Hills City Schools  
Division Leadership Team Quarterly Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
December 4, 2012**

**School:** Happy Hills Elementary (Principal – Susie Sunshine)

The division leadership team and Ms. Susie Sunshine reviewed strategies and data analyses for students who are **at risk of failing a reading or mathematics SOL**. The data revealed.....

Ms. Susie Sunshine reviewed strategies and data analysis for students who have been identified for **PALS intervention (K-3)**. The data revealed .....

Ms. Susie Sunshine reviewed strategies and data analysis for students who **failed the SOL reading or mathematics assessment in 2011-2012**. The data revealed .....

Ms. Susie Sunshine reviewed strategies and data analysis for students who are **below grade level in reading or mathematics based on a disability**. The data revealed .....

The division leadership team and Ms. Sunshine made the following decisions to address the student performance data:

- The **Happy Hills Reading Specialist** will .....
- The **Happy Hills Mathematics Specialist** will .....
- **Ms. Sunshine** will .....
- The following **indicators** will be added to the **division’s** improvement plan .....
- The following **indicators** will be added to the **school’s** improvement plan .....
- The following **tasks** will be added to the **division’s** improvement plan .....
- The following **tasks** will be added to the **school’s** improvement plan .....



## **Section 5: Adaptive Reading Assessment and Algebra Readiness Diagnostic Test (ARDT)**

## Adaptive Reading Assessment Programs and Algebra Readiness Diagnostic Test (ARDT)

The importance of tiered intervention programs cannot be underscored for schools that do not meet the annual measurable objectives (AMO) for proficiency gaps groups. Therefore, identified focus schools will be required to implement the following assessment programs and use the data to design interventions to meet individual student's needs.

### Adaptive Reading Assessment Programs

If a focus school does not have an adaptive reading assessment program to determine student growth at least quarterly, one approved by the VDOE will be required for students who failed the SOL assessment in the previous year, with a particular focus on underperforming subgroups. The selected online computer adaptive testing (CAT) system should administer assessments to determine each student's overall reading ability. The system must be able to adjust the difficulty of questions based on performance, and track the performance of individual students, classrooms, and the school over time. Students should be grouped by tiers for intervention based on the assessment results. The assigned VDOE division liaison will monitor the LEA's implementation of this requirement on a quarterly basis.

To obtain approval regarding the selected adaptive reading assessment, the focus school principal should submit the *Adaptive Reading Assessment Program Approval Form* via the Indistar® Dashboard no later than **September 20, 2013**. A copy of the form may be found in Appendix D.

### Algebra Readiness Diagnostic Test (ARDT)

All focus schools with grade 5 or higher will be required to use the *Algebra Readiness Diagnostic Test (ARDT)* provided by VDOE. This Web-based application employs a computer adaptive testing engine to help determine student proficiency in mathematics. It will be **required** for students who failed the SOL assessment in the previous year, students with disabilities, and ELL. The application draws from a pool of over 2,000 test items in real time. The test items are correlated to the new Mathematics Standards of Learning for grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and Algebra I and were reviewed by a group of Virginia educators for accuracy and validity. Beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, technology enhanced items will be added to the ARDT. Results from the diagnostic test are available immediately and provide information correlated to the SOL reporting categories. This information provides data to develop and focus on interventions for those students who are most at risk.

The results of the **Algebra Readiness Diagnostic Test (ARDT)** should be recorded on the *Algebra Readiness Diagnostic Test (ARDT) Reporting Form* posted on the Indistar® Dashboard by **October 1, 2013 and May 1, 2014**. A copy of the form may be found in Appendix E.

The current administration of the ARDT will transition to the next administration on August 26, 2013. New allocations of testing units will be transferred to school divisions at the time of switchover between the current and next administration. Allocations will be roughly the same as in February 2013. Unused testing units that were purchased by school divisions will be carried over to the 2013-2014 administration.

For the purposes of elementary focus and elementary priority schools, the division may use a computer adaptive assessment from a vendor on the approved list of growth measure vendors rather than the ARDT. This list can be found at:

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/school\\_finance/procurement/student\\_growth\\_assessments/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/school_finance/procurement/student_growth_assessments/index.shtml)

Additional information regarding the ARDT may be found at

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/mathematics/middle/algebra\\_readiness/diagnostic\\_test/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/mathematics/middle/algebra_readiness/diagnostic_test/index.shtml)



## **Section 6: Differentiated Technical Assistance for Schools and Divisions**

## Differentiated Technical Assistance for Schools and Divisions

A focus school may receive additional technical assistance to supplement the support of its division liaison. The OSI2 provides direct technical assistance to school and central office personnel via the **Differentiated Technical Assistance Team (DTAT)**, a cadre of highly-skilled retired educators and education consultants selected based on expertise in one or more areas of technical assistance. Under the direction of the OSI, these contractors collaborate with stakeholders to build local capacity for raising student achievement.

Technical assistance plans will identify goals to be addressed, the nature and duration of technical assistance, the responsibilities of contractors and LEA participants, and how technical assistance will be evaluated. Technical assistance may be provided through one or more of the following methods:

- Assistance from the VDOE staff;
- Direct consultation with a DTAT contractor, on-site and/or via telephone and e-mail;
- Participation in one or more webinars;
- Peer mentoring from other schools or divisions under the coordination of the DTAT contractor;
- A menu of resources such as recorded webinars, slide presentations, and links to publications, tools, materials, and organizations; and
- Other.

Differentiated Technical Assistance Team (DTAT) pre-recorded Web-based courses and resources may be accessed at: [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school\\_improvement/training/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/training/index.shtml) .

During the 2013-2014 school year, school and/or division leadership teams may participate in **School Improvement Support Session (SISS) webinars**. These **voluntary** sessions will focus on the basic components of the Indistar® Web-based planning tool and improvement planning processes. Participants will have an opportunity ask questions and receive technical assistance. All sessions will begin at 10:00 a.m. on the following dates:

- September 26, 2013
- October 17, 2013
- November 21, 2013
- January 16, 2014
- February 20, 2014
- March 20, 2014



## **Section 7: Appendices**

## **Appendix A**

### **Focus School and Division Leadership Team Checklist**

**Office of School Improvement  
Focus Schools and Division Leadership Teams – Cohort I  
2013 Checklist**

Date	Task
August 12 and 13, 2013	<b>Focus school principals and division contact persons</b> will participate in a <b>webinar with OSI staff</b> to discuss the 2013-2014 required activities for focus schools.
September 16, 2013	The <b>division contact person</b> will participate in the <i>Division Leadership Support Team</i> meeting at The College of William and Mary. <b>Note: On July 16, 2013, the division superintendent received an e-mail from Dr. Kathleen Smith regarding selection of a key instructional leader to serve as the division contact person who will attend this meeting.</b>
September 16, 2013	The <b>division contact person</b> will submit an <b>approved purchase order</b> to <i>University Instructors</i> and provide a copy to Annette Monroe-Martin at:  <a href="mailto:annette.monroe-martin@doe.virginia.gov">annette.monroe-martin@doe.virginia.gov</a> .
September 20, 2013	The <b>focus school principal</b> will submit the <b>Data Query System Approval Form</b> via the Indistar® Dashboard.
September 20, 2013	The <b>focus school principal</b> will submit the <b>Adaptive Reading Assessment Approval Form</b> via the Indistar® Dashboard.
September 26, 2013  October 17, 2013  November 21, 2013  January 16, 2014  February 20, 2014  March 20, 2014	<b>School and/or division leadership teams</b> may participate in <b>School Improvement Support Session (SISS) webinars</b> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These <b>voluntary</b> sessions will focus on the basic components of the Indistar® Web-based planning tool and improvement planning processes.</li> <li>• Participants will have an opportunity ask questions and receive technical assistance.</li> <li>• All sessions will begin at 10:00 a.m.</li> </ul>
October 1, 2013	<b>School and division leadership teams</b> will revise and align their improvement plans using information gleaned from the Spring 2013 Standards of Learning (SOL) results and other relevant data.  Both revised improvement plans will be submitted via the Indistar® Dashboard.
October 1, 2013	A copy of the local educational agency's <b>notification letter distributed to the parents</b> of students attending focus schools should be uploaded into the school's Indistar® Filing Cabinet.
October 1, 2013	<b>The Algebra Readiness Diagnostic Test (ARDT) Reporting Form</b> should be completed

	<p>and submitted via the Indistar® Dashboard.</p> <p>*Required for schools with grade 5 or higher</p>
<p><b>October 2013 – May 2014</b></p>	<p>The <b>division leadership team member</b> assigned to each focus school will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Participate</b> in the monthly school leadership team meeting to provide support and guidance.</li> <li>• <b>Enter</b> monthly coaching comments into Indistar related to the school’s improvement plan. The school leadership team will respond to the comments.</li> </ul>
<p><b>October 22, 23, or 24, 2013</b></p>	<p>Office of School Improvement staff will conduct live, regional trainings on the academic review process for school divisions on October 22, 23, and 24, 2013. These trainings should be attended by <b>central office key instructional personnel</b>. The trainings will be conducted at regional locations to be announced later and will be <b>one</b> day in length.</p>
<p><b>*November 22, 2013</b></p> <p><b>*February 14, 2014</b></p> <p><b>*April 30, 2014</b></p> <p><b>*June 30, 2014</b></p>	<p>The <b>division leadership support team</b> will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Meet</b> with the school improvement team of each focus school to discuss the quarterly data and needed revisions to the school improvement plans. Monthly meeting minutes and agendas must be posted on the Indistar® Web site.</li> <li>• <b>Make</b> revisions to the division improvement plan (i.e. adding indicators and/or tasks) based on information gleaned from the meeting with the focus schools.</li> </ul> <p><b>Both division- and school- level leaderships teams</b> will enter data associated with the identified tasks in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Assessment Component</b> of the Indistar® Main Menu <b>OR</b></li> <li>○ <b>Filing Cabinet located on the Indistar® Dashboard</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Information regarding the data must be stated explicitly</b> within the monitoring comments (i.e., <i>Tier 2 students were administered the Happy Town Reading Assessment, and 45% of them met the benchmark</i>).</p> <p>A <b>copy of the spreadsheet from the VDOE-approved data query system</b> must be uploaded into the school’s <b>Filing Cabinet</b> located on the Indistar® Dashboard. The spreadsheet must contain the following data regarding students receiving Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student attendance</li> <li>• Student discipline infractions</li> <li>• Reading and mathematics grades</li> <li>• Benchmark results</li> <li>• Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) Fall and Spring Benchmarks</li> <li>• Student transfers</li> <li>• Interventions assigned to the student</li> </ul> <p><b>Note: Please remove all personally identifiable information prior to uploading the spreadsheet.</b></p> <p><b>* School and division improvement plans will be submitted via the Indistar®</b></p>

	<b>Dashboard.</b>
<b>May 1, 2014</b>	<b>The Algebra Readiness Diagnostic Test (ARDT) Reporting Form</b> should be completed and submitted via the Indistar® Dashboard. *Required for schools with grade 5 or higher

**Appendix B**

**Data System Approval Form**

**Office of School Improvement**  
**Focus Schools – Data Query System Approval Form**

Directions: Per the ESEA Flexibility Waiver, focus schools are required to analyze a variety of data points on a quarterly basis using an electronic data query system. The **Virginia Dashboard – Datacation** or a **VDOE-approved data system** may be used to compile student data and track interventions. Please complete and submit this form via the Indistar® Dashboard.

School Name:

Division:

1. Name of electronic data query system:

***Note: If the Virginia Dashboard – Datacation is being used, please disregard questions 2-5.***

2. Provide a brief description of the proposed electronic data query system:

3. Will the proposed electronic data query system generate reports including the following:

- a. Student attendance? -
- b. Benchmark results? -
- c. Reading and mathematics grades? -
- d. Student discipline reports? -
- e. Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) data? -
- f. Student transfer data? -

4. Will the proposed electronic data query system allow users to assign interventions to specific students (i.e., special education, students who failed a Standards of Learning assessment) ?

5. Describe how the proposed electronic data query system monitors interventions for specific students.

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**Office of School Improvement (OSI) use only:**

- Electronic data query system approved
- Electronic data query system **not** approved

Reason(s):

## Appendix C

### 45-Day Pre-SOL Plan

## Standards of Learning (SOL) 45-Day Pre-SOL Instructional Plan

<b>Name of School:</b>	<b>Principal:</b>
<b>Name of Division:</b>	<b>Date Completed:</b>

**Complete the Pre-SOL instructional plan and include detailed plans for each core instructional area. You will need to use current assessment data to assist with development of your instructional plan as indicated below. The plan should be no longer than three pages.**

The purpose of this plan is to indicate the strategies that will be in place during the 45 instructional days prior to testing to:

1. Ensure that the SOL Blueprints are used to direct the planning of instruction for SOL objectives not covered or not covered well during the year.
2. Ensure that the SOL Blueprints are used to direct remediation efforts for students who have not mastered SOL objectives.
3. Emphasize that this should be the priority of everyone in the building to ensure that "all hands are "on deck" to support increased student achievement.

Question/Task	Response/Strategies
Who assisted in the development of this plan?	
<p>How will the school ensure that the SOL Blueprints and certain data from the third quarter benchmark assessments are used to direct the planning of instruction for SOL objectives not covered or not mastered during the year?</p> <p>Provide detailed strategies. Include who is responsible for each strategy. For example: <i>Third grade teachers will meet to determine what specific SOL content needs to be reviewed. Lesson plans will be developed to review the content.</i></p> <p>Include a detailed plan, using benchmark and other test data for targeting teachers who need additional support in making sure all content is covered. List specific examples of strategies to be used (i.e. plan weekly, monitor by assistant principal or instructional specialist).</p>	
How will the school ensure that the SOL Blueprints and certain data from the third quarter benchmark	

<p>assessments are used to direct remediation efforts for students who have not mastered SOL objectives?</p> <p>Provide detailed strategies. Include who is responsible for each strategy. For example: <i>Fifth grade mathematics teachers will spend thirty minutes per day working with small groups of students on specific SOL content as indicated in benchmark assessments.</i></p> <p>Include a plan for targeting students who need additional support in mastering SOL objectives.</p> <p>List specific programs/activities that will be used for remediation (i.e. tutoring plan, I Can Learn™, Saturday Academy).</p>	
<p>How will the principal emphasize the priority needed by everyone in the building to ensure that "all hands are on deck" to support increased student achievement?</p> <p><i>The principal must review the plan with all teachers in the building prior to the spring break so that the plan will be implemented no later than the first day of return from spring break.</i></p>	

## Appendix D

### Adaptive Reading Assessment – Approval Form

**Office of School Improvement  
Focus Schools - Adaptive Reading Assessment  
Approval Form**

Directions: Per the ESEA Flexibility Waiver, focus schools are required to implement a VDOE-approved adaptive reading program to determine student growth at least quarterly. Please enter the requested responses below.

School Name:

Division:

6. Name of adaptive reading assessment:

7. Provide a brief description of the assessment:

3. Does the program provide:

a. Lexile scores?

b. Grade equivalency scores?

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**Office of School Improvement (OSI) use only:**

Adaptive reading assessment approved

Adaptive reading assessment **not** approved

Reason(s):

## **Appendix E**

### **Algebra Readiness Diagnostic Test (ARDT) Reporting Form**

## Algebra Readiness Diagnostic Test (ARDT) Reporting Form

Division Name

School Name

Grade-Level

Subject

### **Part I: ARDT Data**

Grade-level Test Administered	Content Included	Possible Grade-level Test Scores	Pre-Test (Number of Students Scoring at Each Level)	Post-Test (Number of Students Scoring at Each Level)
CAT6	Grades 3-6	1300-1699		
CAT7	Grades 3-7	1300-1799		
CAT8	Grades 3-8	1300-1899		
CATAlg	Algebra I	1900-1999		

### **Part II: Exemption from ARDT Requirement**

Please complete the information below if your school has been given a waiver by Dr. Kathleen Smith, director of the Office of School Improvement, from administering the ARDT to grade 5 students.

Date that exemption was granted by Dr. Smith:

Approved substitute assessment:

***Note: Please upload the results of the substitute assessment into the Indistar® Filing Cabinet by October 1, 2013.***