



# Office of School Improvement Newsletter

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## Message from the Editors

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Welcome to the first issue of the School Improvement Newsletter. We are planning to publish the newsletter quarterly during the school year. We hope that you enjoy reading it, and find it helpful as we all work together for the benefit of the children. The Office of School Improvement (OSI) is very excited about the great work that has been accomplished since the beginning of the 2010-11 school year. This year we are focusing our resources and support at the division level. Our Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) contractors (division liaisons, external division team leads and coaches) have joined and are supporting division teams in providing technical assistance as division teams provide deliberate and targeted assistance to their schools in improvement. We applaud the efforts of the division teams in welcoming these highly qualified professionals as members of their division level support teams. Additionally, key initiatives available through OSI include: Indistar™ division and school Improvement web-based planning and teacher leader training supported by the Center on Innovation and Improvement (CII) in partnership with the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center (ARCC); formative assessment training through TeachFirst; division level support team training in partnership with the College of William and Mary; monthly webinars with faculty support from the Virginia Association for Secondary School Principal Association (VASSP). We look forward to a successful year!

## School Improvement Planning Update

The Office of School Improvement (OSI) has collaborated with the Center on Innovation and Improvement (CII) to develop a web-based improvement planning tool, Indistar™, 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. The web-based tool includes *Wise Ways* research briefs to support its indicators of effective practice. In addition, Indistar™ provides *Indicators in Action* video modules demonstrating the research-based rapid improvement school indicators. One of the most innovative components of Indistar™ is the virtual coaching through *Coaching Comments* feature which enables the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) contractors to offer feedback to their assigned division and school teams. For more information regarding Indistar™, visit the web site at <http://www.centerii.org>.

## Important Dates

- Jan. 10**— Division liaisons meeting in Williamsburg
- Jan. 11**— Lead Turnaround Partner (LTP) and Strand IV training
- Jan. 14**— Istation Update (Strand IV)
- Jan. 15**—LTP Indistar plans due (Strand IV)
- Jan. 18**—Indistar Training™ Webinar (Strand V)
- Jan. 20 and 21** —Teacher Leader Training (Strand I)
- Jan. 30**—Second review of Indistar™ plans
- Feb. 7**— Division contact persons and division liaisons meeting in Williamsburg (Strand II)
- Feb. 8-11**— Data Analysis Quarterly Report due (Strands I, III, and V)
- Mar. 7**—Division liaisons meeting in Williamsburg
- Mar. 18**—Formative Assessment Training (Strand III)
- Mar. 28**— Division contact persons and division liaisons meeting in Williamsburg (Strand II)
- Mar. 30 and 31**—Teacher Leader Training (Strand I)
- Mar. 31**— Data Analysis Quarterly Report due (Strands I, III, and V)

Note: Please refer to the webinar schedule for dates and times of monthly webinars.

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## Strand Updates

As a component of the 1003(a) and 1003(g) grants, divisions and schools participated in the *Virginia Model for School Improvement Summer Institute* and were assigned to strands. Members of each strand will participate in a variety of improvement activities such as monthly webinars, submission of data analysis quarterly reports, and meetings.

**Strand I** consists of schools in Year 1 holding or beyond of Title I school improvement. and their division contacts. Participants in this strand are new to working with the Office of School Improvement (OSI). Activities include monthly webinars for both division and school teams and participation in the following teacher leader training sessions: *Effective Teaming, Instructional Planning, Collegial Learning, Classroom Culture and Instructional Delivery*.

**Strand II** consists of the division contact persons associated with Strand I or III schools who participated in Strand I activities during the 2009-2010 academic year. Participants in this strand participate in the Division Leadership Support Team grant implemented by the College of William and Mary in conjunction with the OSI. Activities include semi-monthly meetings with their assigned VDOE-contracted division liaisons.

**Strand III** consists of schools in Year 1 holding or beyond of Title I school improvement who participated in Strand I activities during the 2009-2010 academic year. Participants in this strand participate in the *Formative Assessment Series* through Editure (formerly TeachFirst). Activities include monthly webinars and implementation of the following formative assessment modules:

*Assessment for Learning, Checking for Understanding, Feedback, and Uncovering Misconceptions.*

**Strand IV** consists of schools that are working with lead turnaround partners (LTP) to assist them with their school improvement efforts. Participants in this strand focus on either the CII Transformation Toolkit or the 25 VDOE request for proposal (RFP) requirements.

**Strand V** consists of schools that are newly identified in Year 1 of Title I school improvement. Participants in this strand concentrate on developing a school improvement plan using the Indistar™ web-based planning tool.

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## OSI Bookshelf

Brookhart, S. (2008) *How to Give Effective Feedback to Your Students*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

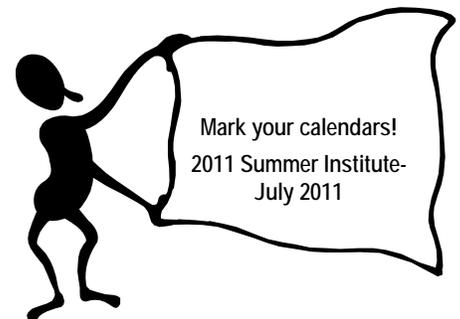
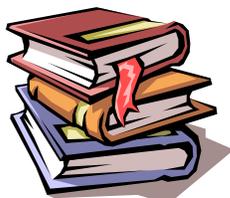
Guskey, T.R. (2010). Lessons of mastery learning. *Educational Leadership*, 68 (2), 52-57.

Hattie, J. & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 77(1), 81-112.

Marzano, R.J. (2009). Setting the record straight on "high yield" strategies. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 91(1), 30-37.

Stiggins, R. (2009). Assessment "for" learning in upper elementary grades. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 90(6), 419-421.

Tomlinson, C.A. (2010) *Leading and Managing a Differentiated Classroom*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.





## Kudos of the Quarter from the OSI Contractors

**Arlington Public Schools**—The division leadership team, facilitated by Dr. Donna Snyder, is to be commended for collaboratively providing support to their “Fab Four” schools in improvement. The team effectively uses Indistar™ to monitor school plans and meets monthly with school leadership teams to observe implementation of formative assessment strategies.

**Culpeper County Schools**—The very effective Response to Intervention (RTI) model used by the division and schools to identify student instructional needs and plan remediation programs. The quarterly data meetings are attended by division personnel, school administration and coaches, as well as external consultants hired by the division.

**Charles City County Schools** - The division team is to be commended for its internal efforts in the school improvement process to increase student performance and achievement through frequent monitoring of student performance data and its support of Charles City Elementary in adjusting instruction based on those data.

**Fredericksburg City Schools**—The staff members at Walker – Grant Elementary truly take to heart the meaning of establishing a Leadership Team and empowering them. Their quarterly report was used by their Leadership Team to determine new and/or revised tasks for their Indistar™ Plan. The school’s assistant administrator, Ms. Melanie Wyatt, developed a template that the members were supposed to place their suggestion on after carefully reviewing their Quarterly Report. The suggested tasks were then discussed in their Leadership Team meeting and they then determined the ones that they wanted to use and place in their plan.

**Greensville County Public Schools**— The division team is to be commended for its early intervention and support in providing learners at Greensville Elementary School with focused and sustained opportunities to develop and apply higher-order thinking skills—also a prescription of Teacher Leader Training.

**Hampton City Schools**— Captain John Smith Elementary is successfully implementing the formative assessment protocol. The principal, assistant principal., school improvement coach, Title I director , and classroom teachers all present information on a bi- weekly basis in order to have full implementation of the different strategies

**King George County Schools** —Kudos go to Kristine Hill of King George County for taking on the new responsibility of leading her school division team through school improvement.

**Louisa County Schools**—The development of a computerized student data system in collaboration with the Trevilians Elementary School staff lead by Dr. Amy Scott, assistant principal. The division and school team have used this data to make informed instructional and program decisions that have a direct impact on student achievement.

**Lunenburg County Schools** —Kudos go to Marie Gee for taking on the new responsibility of leading her school division team through school improvement.

**Madison County**—The development of a data wall by the Madison Primary School staff that is being very effectively used by the school and the joint division, Madison Primary School and Waverly Yowell Elementary School SIP team to develop a school improvement plan that is based on student data.

**Newport News Public Schools**— The Palmer Elementary School coach, Lisa Coon, has developed a personal student data notebook for students at risk in Gr.3-5. Each student is assigned a mentor to meet with the student at least once every week and work on their identified needs and keep a record of their progress in their data notebook.

**Northampton County Schools**—Kudos go to Annette Gray for taking on the new responsibility of leading her school division teams through school improvement.

**Stafford County Schools**—The use of data books by Kate Waller Elementary School to drive instruction and remediation. Kate Wall made AYP in 2009-10 and as a result the division is supporting other schools with implementation of data books, modeled after Kate Waller.

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*The Office of School Improvement* promotes student learning and achievement by assisting schools and school divisions in the implementation of effective instructional strategies and best practices. The responsibilities of the Office of School Improvement include school-level and division-level academic reviews, school improvement planning and innovative programs such as the Partnership for Achieving Successful Schools (PASS).



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The ultimate goal in school improvement is for the people attached to the school to drive its continuous improvement for the sake of their own children and students.

- Dr. Sam Redding, 2009

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