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## **Board of Education Sets May 14 Public Hearing on Franklin City Public Schools' Corrective Plan**

The Virginia Board of Education will conduct a public hearing next week on Franklin City Public Schools' plan to correct deficiencies identified in a state academic review of the division. The public hearing is scheduled for 7 p.m., Wednesday, May 14, at J.P. King Middle School, 501 Charles Street in Franklin.

All three of Franklin's schools are rated as Accredited with Warning for a second consecutive year. The schools also are under federal sanctions for not meeting goals for increased achievement in reading and mathematics under Virginia's No Child Left Behind waiver.

"The Board of Education wants to make sure that parents, students, teachers, taxpayers, business leaders and other Franklin residents have an opportunity to express their views on the adequacy of the school board's plan to improve the quality of education for Franklin City's children," Board of Education President Christian N. Braunlich said. "Lasting change will only come if the community is engaged and part of the improvement process, and we very much want to hear their views on the corrective action plan and the state of education generally."

In January, an academic review team reported to the Board of Education that the accountability status of Franklin's schools was due, in part, to the division's failure to implement the Standards of Quality, which define the foundational instructional program all school divisions must provide.

The findings led to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the state board — approved by the Franklin School Board on April 17 — requiring the local school board to develop a corrective action plan spelling out the steps it will take to improve instruction, raise student achievement and correct issues related to division governance. Once the plan has been accepted by the state Board of Education, Franklin's school board and division superintendent will be required to implement the plan and provide periodic progress reports to the state board.

The Franklin School Board has already consented to Superintendent of Public Instruction Steven R. Staples assigning a chief academic officer to monitor and coordinate the actions of division instructional staff and the school turnaround partners assigned to Franklin. The chief academic officer also will have administrative oversight of federal and state funds that support programs to raise the achievement of the division's at-risk and low-income students.

In addition, the Franklin School Board has agreed to provide the state superintendent with the names and credentials of its top three finalists to replace the outgoing division superintendent prior to making an offer to a candidate and to consult with the state superintendent before making recommendations to the city school board on instruction and instructional personnel.

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