



Dorchester County
Public Schools
Every Child A Success!

SUPERINTENDENT'S STAFF BULLETIN

Henry V. Wagner, Jr., Ed.D. Superintendent

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The Status of Maryland's Third Wave of Reform in DCPS

On **Tuesday, January 24**, I had the pleasure of participating in the **Dorchester Educators'** dinner meeting with **MSEA Vice President Betty Weller, DE President Danielle Cox, UniServe Representative Theresa Miles**, and over **twenty representatives** from our schools. The objectives of the meeting included establishing a plan to work collaboratively with all stakeholders in creating an **evaluation tool**. This mandate is part of the larger picture of Maryland's participation in **Race to the Top (RTTT)**, which **MSDE** is calling the **Third Wave of Reform**. For those of you who were not working in Maryland at the time, the first "wave" of reform was the **Maryland School Performance Program** – known as the **MSPP/MSPAP** era. The second wave of reform is still with us; it is known as **No Child Left Behind (NCLB)**.

President Danielle Cox graciously allowed me the opportunity to discuss at some length the emerging elements of RTTT and how they relate to the ongoing mandates of NCLB. What educators throughout the state are finding is that the **timelines** for adopting a new evaluation system, transitioning from the existing **State Curriculum** to the **Common Core State Standards**, introducing the **PARCC Assessments**, and still fulfilling the demands of **AYP** do not easily align! As stakeholders throughout Maryland (and including the 24 district superintendents) cope with this challenge, we in DCPS will continue to work collaboratively in our **climate of trust** on behalf of what is best for our students.

In that spirit, I also shared the key features of our instructional leadership professional development program in DCPS. (See the **January 2012 bulletin** for more details on this.) Of special interest to the gathering was the approach we use to unlock insights during the **formal post-observation conference**. The methodology we have built over several years elevates this experience to a **one-on-one professional development** event that is both **differentiated** and **data-driven**. It is my sincere belief that this model of the instructional "conversation" will be useful to DCPS for many years and will function harmoniously in any reform model.

Task Forces in DCPS – Updates

Elementary School Task Force

Mrs. Regina Teat, Supervisor of Early Childhood and Elementary Education

Elementary Schools Continuing the Transition to the Common Core State Standards

As we begin term three of the 2011-2012 school year, we continue with the beginning understandings of the **Common Core State Standards (CCSS)** and what that will look like in the elementary classroom. In **mathematics**, we continue to develop curriculum for grades **prekindergarten, kindergarten and first grade**. This task has been tremendous—the hard work of our **Math Instructional Coaches** and the input and reflection from our **classroom teachers** is really paying off! All grades prekindergarten through fifth are incorporating the **Math Practices** in daily instruction. In **reading/language arts**, we have begun to map out a year-long curriculum guide for language arts instruction which includes language, speaking and listening, and writing. Rigor and text complexity as well as increasing the amount of informational text will be key focus areas in our transition.

If you haven't had the chance to view the materials on the **School Improvement in Maryland** website at www.mdk12.org, take a few minutes to visit the link “**2011 Fall Webinars**”. Under the Reading/Language Arts Webinar heading, click on the “**Common Core Standards for ELA and Literacy**”. There are several short videos that explain “**Why**” we now have the CCSS and what that should look like in the elementary classroom.

Middle School Task Force

Mrs. Patricia Vickers, Supervisor of Title I and II, Parent Involvement, and Science

The Middle School Task Force did not meet in January; however, work continues with the **Homework Subcommittee** chaired by **Mace's Lane Middle School Principal, Dr. James VanSciver**. The committee will present its findings at the next task force meeting in February. Also included on the agenda are planning for the **summer school enrichment courses**, and a **data analysis** of student performance on district **benchmark** exams.

High School Task Force

Mr. Michael Johnson, Supervisor of Mathematics and Local Accountability Coordinator

The Dorchester County Public School High School Program of Study has been forwarded to the middle and high schools for distribution to students in grades 8 through 11. The Program of Study will be used

during the course selection and registration process for the upcoming **2012-2013** school year. Please notice several additional changes to the 2012-2013 Program of Study:

- A) **German III** has been added as a World Languages elective. (page 48)
- B) An overview of the **Chesapeake College Dual Enrollment Program** is now included in the Registration Guidelines section. (pages 13 and 14)
- C) Guidelines for membership in the **Ella B. Walter (CSDHS) and Kiakime (NDHS) Chapters of the National Honor Society** have been revised for the 2012 cohort. (page 11)

The High School Task Force will continue to **meet each month** to ensure consistency in following our mission and vision for continued student success and active community involvement.

Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets

Contributed by Angela Mercier

Partnership for a Drug Free Dorchester

Asset #2: Positive Family Communication

Child and his/her parent(s) communicate positively.

Child is willing to seek advice and counsel from his/her parent(s).

It is important for **parents** to provide support and have frequent, in-depth conversations with their children. The words and actions we choose have the **power to build relationships**. Of the youth surveyed, only 28% have this asset in their lives. Listed below are several ways to promote **positive family communication**:

At Home

- Make the most of family mealtimes. Sit and discuss topics that matter to your child.
- Give your child a chance to tell you what he thinks. Your child may not be able to share his thoughts right away, so sit until he sorts out a reply.
- Observe rather than judge. Take your child's feelings seriously. Sometimes you can help identify what your child is feeling.

At School

- Do not wait for problems to arise before talking with your students' parents. Keep in contact with parents about how their child is doing and what they can do to help their child learn.
- Praise young people when they make you happy. Show you care about them by using positive words.

In the Community

- When children call their parents at the office, community center, club, or wherever, make it a priority that parents receive the call.
- Learn the names of young people who live near you or work with you and take the time to talk to them.

In the Congregation

- Sponsor discussion nights for parents and children, especially teens. Publicize the topics in advance.

For more information about the 40 Developmental Assets, view Search Institute's website: www.search-institute.org/assets.

Budget Update

In anticipation of the annual preparation of budgets, the **Eastern Shore Superintendents** commissioned **Dr. Memo Diriker of the Salisbury University Business, Economic, and Community Outreach Network (BEACON)** to study the economic impact of public education budgets on the region. Their findings include the following general statement:

The Public School Systems (grades K through 12) of the Eastern Shore of Maryland provide a wide array of benefits to the residents of each of the counties. In addition to the educational services provided to the students of the county, the expenditures of the school system provide a significant economic impact in the county and region. The average return on investment (local economic impact compared to taxpayer investment) of the public school systems on the Eastern Shore was approximately 35% for 2011. When examined as a region the return on investment of the nine county public school systems is approximately 92%.

On **Thursday, February 2**, Dr. Diriker and his colleagues will present their Dorchester-specific findings to our **Board of Education and Dorchester County Council**. These findings will certainly be helpful as we advocate for full funding of our programs.

Covey Reflection

*“Habit Two, **Begin With the End in Mind**, is facilitated by identifying the specific roles you play in the different areas of your life. Think about the long-term goals you want to accomplish in each of these roles. Roles and goals give structure and direction to your personal mission.*