



Dorchester County  
Public Schools  
Every Child A Success!

# SUPERINTENDENT'S STAFF BULLETIN

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

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*Happy New Year!*

## Our Leadership Development Activities Continue in 2012

Beginning in the **summer of 2010**, DCPS has focused, in partnership with the **MSDE Breakthrough Center**, on **instructional leadership development**. The guiding **attributes** to which we aspire were developed thoughtfully and collaboratively at the **Administrative and Supervisory Retreat** that summer. This guiding profile or “end in mind” consists of the following attributes:

- Possess **people and relationship skills**, including the ability to make connections, promote synergy, and foster positive beliefs.
- Have **high expectations** for students/staff and provide opportunities for leadership, personal growth, and collaborative decision-making.
- **Use student data** and data collected during the observation process to make recommendations for improvement of classroom instruction.
- **Communicate** effectively and seek first to understand in the spirit of **building trust**.
- Are creative, innovative, and committed to **continuous improvement**.
- **Align curriculum, instruction, and assessment** to promote rigorous, engaging, and purposeful student learning.
- Utilize **formative assessments** as a regular part of the evaluation of student performance leading to appropriate interventions.
- Are able to visualize and communicate the **vision**, keep it in focus, and help others to do the same.
- Are able to **collaborate** with all stakeholders for the purpose of accomplishing goals and objectives that are derived from the vision/mission.
- Are balanced, organized, knowledgeable, and able to discern strengths for the purpose of **effective delegation**.

In pursuit of these ideals, we (**principals, supervisors, available assistant principals, the executive team, and our MSDE partners**) have been deeply immersed in professional development activities at each monthly **Administrative Council** meeting. This year's specific topics have included **formal observation feedback techniques** (mostly review of last year) and **informal observation procedures**. Next on our learning agenda will be **instructional walkthrough programs** and skillful **formative data analysis**. Once we are able to put all of this together, we will have the key pieces of **instructional improvement cycles** in place.

## **Task Forces in DCPS – Updates**

### *Elementary School Task Force*

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

The Elementary School Task force continues to move forward on implementing **Cooperative Learning**. Administrators and instructional coaches are embedding various “**CL**” structures in their PD opportunities and staff meetings. A countywide book club opportunity will be offered for credit this winter/spring and every elementary teacher will be invited to attend a one-day **Kagan Cooperative Learning** workshop this summer. The payoff for ALL of our students will be their active engagement in their learning opportunities.

### *Middle School Task Force*

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

**Revisions to the Middle School Program of Study:** The task force worked collaboratively to update and edit the 2012-2013 edition of the **Middle School Program of Study**. The final draft will be reviewed at the January task force meeting.

**Middle School Algebra Students and HSA Pass Rate:** Data was presented regarding the pass rate of students taking the **Algebra/Data Analysis HSA** after taking Algebra I in middle school. Further data analysis and discussion are planned for this topic and it will be presented at the next MSTF meeting.

**Homework Subcommittee Report:** **Dr. VanSciver, Principal of Mace's Lane Middle School**, is chairperson of a subcommittee to determine recommendations for **homework** at the middle school level. The subcommittee first met on November 30 to discuss possible procedures for homework. The first draft of a **philosophy statement** regarding middle school homework was presented for consideration by the committee.

### *High School Task Force*

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

The High School Task Force completed the **2012–2013 High School Program of Study**. This course of study includes course descriptions for **Dorchester Career and Technology Center (DCTC)** courses, the infusion of **Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)** into the general curriculum, and

required **Advanced Placement (AP)** exams for students enrolled in AP courses. A description of the new assessment for **English Language Learners (ELLs)** and revisions to Maryland graduation requirements are also included in the 2012-2013 High School Program of Study, which will be distributed to students at the beginning of the second semester.

### *Minority Achievement Task Force*

*Dr. Gwendolyn Handy, Supervisor of Minority Achievement and Social Studies*

The Minority Achievement Task Force is coordinating the implementation of **MSDE's cultural proficiency course** starting with **administrators and supervisors** in the county beginning **January 5, 2012**. **COMAR 13.A.04.05 in the Education That Is Multicultural By-Law** mandates that all staff receive professional development in cultural proficiency. *Cultural Proficiency and Accelerating Student Achievement for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* is a 45-hour, 15-session continuing professional development course that will provide our instructional leaders with the skills and competencies listed in COMAR. The course will be held on Thursdays from 4:30–7:30 p.m. at the Career and Technology Center. Everyone completing the course will earn **3 MSDE credits**.

Eventually, all school staff are expected to take a cultural proficiency course.

### **Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets**

*Contributed by Angela Mercier*

*Partnership for a Drug Free Dorchester*

*Dorchester County Health Department*

#### **Asset #1: Family Support**

*Family life provides high levels of love and support.*

It is no surprise that the first asset that is essential for raising healthy children is **family support**. Of the youth surveyed, 68% have this asset in their lives. Listed below are several ways to promote family support:

#### **At Home**

- Give more hugs and verbal reinforcement. Don't assume that your kids know how much you love them. Tell them.
- Let your love for your children show in the way you look at them, the words you say, your tone of voice, and your body language.

## **At School**

- Educate parents on how to be supportive of their children. Check with your school counselor or social worker for suggestions.
- During school conferences and parent meetings, focus on the positive.

## **In the Community**

- Offer workshops for parents on positive parenting skills. Invite experts to speak on ways for parents to show love and support to their children. Allow time for parents to share their ideas and experiences.
- Provide and publicize family crisis hotlines. These give family members a chance to “cool off” during a conflict. Train hotline counselors to suggest appropriate ways to respond to conflict and to refer parents to other resources.

## **In the Congregation**

- Sponsor family nights as a regular part of your youth programming.
- Sponsor celebrations of children and families.

For more information about the **40 Developmental Assets**, view the Search Institute’s website:

[www.search-institute.org/assets](http://www.search-institute.org/assets).

## **Budget Update**

As I reported last month, the Board of Education initiated a meeting with our **state delegation** to reinforce the importance of fully funding public education. That meeting took place on **December 7** and included our entire **Board, the Executive Team, Senator Richard Colburn, Delegate Addie Eckardt, and Delegate Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio**. The delegation was very receptive to our feedback regarding decreasing resources, lack of competitiveness regarding employee compensation, and the ever-increasing and often unfunded mandates. In January, the Board will conduct several workshops (beginning on the 5<sup>th</sup>) to process staff and community feedback on **budget priorities** for 2012-2013.

## **Revised Board of Education Meeting Times**

In response to several requests from the public at recent Board meetings, the **Board of Education** will move the **regular session** starting times of its **January, March, and May** meetings from **3:00 PM to 6:00 PM**. The Board will reassess the matter of starting times for regular sessions for **2012-2013** based on the response to these adjusted times.

## Covey Reflection

*“Habit Two, **Begin With the End in Mind**, is facilitated by writing down your philosophy of life. This should include a focus on what to **be** (character) and **do** (contributions and achievements), and on the values and principles upon which **being** and **doing** are based.*