



Dorchester County  
Public Schools  
Every Child A Success!

# SUPERINTENDENT'S STAFF BULLETIN

Henry V. Wagner, Jr., Superintendent

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## INSTRUCTIONAL UPDATE

One major focus of this year's professional development program for our administrators and supervisors is the manner in which we conduct the **post-observation conference**. The objective is to take full advantage of this **one-on-one professional development** opportunity by promoting a rich **dialogue** between the observer and the teacher. The specifics of this model include conducting the conference as soon as possible after the conclusion of the lesson, thus enabling the observer to subsequently craft a more meaningful narrative portion of the write-up. During the conference, the observer poses **open-ended questions** about the teacher's planning and execution of the lesson. These reflective questions parallel the thought processes that create effective lessons, such as:

- What did you want students to know and/or be able to do by the end of the lesson?
- How did you determine the objective for this lesson and these students? What made it valuable?
- Did students know the purposes for learning?
- Did the formative assessment align to the objective both in terms of rigor and content?
- To what degree did students demonstrate completion of the lesson objective? (Or, where did the learning break down, if it did?)
- What did you do to cause learning?

The conference should conclude with a discussion of goals for the **future professional growth** of the teacher.

In my ongoing experience with this model, the structured-yet-open dialogue respects the teacher as a true professional participant in the instructional conversation. Furthermore, this way of doing business forges a partnership between the teacher and observer to the mutual benefit of both – with the ultimate “end in mind” of enhanced **student achievement**.

## COVEY UPDATE

The second habit of highly effective people “**Begin with the End in Mind.**” In following this visioning habit, the individual applies principles and personal values to create short, intermediate, and long-range life goals. Covey suggests that one should accomplish this by imagining what you would like people to say about you at your funeral. (I prefer to apply the same thinking to one's retirement celebration!) One additional aspect

of this second habit its application to instructional planning. Beginning with the end in mind here insures alignment with content standards and objectives.

## BOARD MISSION STATEMENT

In keeping with this theme of effective and proactive behavior, our Board of Education recently crafted and adopted a new Mission Statement. It reads as follows:

### *Mission Statement*

*The mission of the Dorchester County Board of Education, in partnership with the community, is to provide leadership for excellence in teaching and learning for all students by:*

- *consistently advocating for resources,*
- *continuously developing sound policies, and*
- *carefully monitoring student progress*

Our Board of Education members consistently practice these behaviors with fidelity, and we appreciate their efforts on behalf of our students.

## RACE-TO-THE-TOP UPDATE

In the September bulletin, I presented a basic summary of our participation in the **Race-To-The-Top** initiative, and promised to keep you informed of ongoing developments. In early November, each of the 22 (of 24 Maryland) participating districts will be required to submit a draft “**scope of work**” plan for spending its allocation. Dorchester County Public Schools will allocate its **\$925,006** over the next four years in the required categories of **Standards and Assessments, Data Systems to Support Instruction, Great Teachers and Leaders, and Turning Around Lowest-Achieving Schools**. It is our intention to align the specific uses of funds in each of these categories to ongoing district initiatives. This will include augmenting our instructional technology, data management, and professional development capacities. Finally, all of the districts are waiting for further clarification on the state-wide methodology for that portion of the teacher evaluation that will be based on student performance. Once that is available, we will work collaboratively with **Dorchester Educators** on the re-design of the remaining portions of the appraisal process model. This re-design will reflect our traditional view of the appraisal process as a means of using data to promote student achievement.

## TEACHER OF THE YEAR GALA

On October 8, the DCPS Teacher of the Year, **Crystal Owens**, represented our district and **Choptank Elementary School** with pride and distinction at the statewide TOY Gala in Baltimore. Crystal’s comments at our opening ceremonies in August about **finding one’s voice and daring to accept one’s true potential** still offer us inspiration and capture the essence of our work with students.