



Dorchester County
Public Schools
Every Child A Success!

SUPERINTENDENT'S STAFF BULLETIN

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

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Task Forces in DCPS – 2011-2012 Editions

Once again this year, we rely on a variety of **task forces** to address the special issues that affect various educational levels and/or stakeholder groups. These task forces (which have consisted of **teachers, administrators, parents, community representatives, and district leaders**) continue to be vitally important sources of **collaboration, consensus building, and problem solving**. Indeed, their presence has enabled us to become more systemically aware, and evolve from disparate and isolated approaches to **consistent, countywide practices**. These task forces also help us to process the many changes and reforms associated with both **No Child Left Behind** and the **Race to the Top** initiative. The following chart summarizes the status of these groups:

Task Force and Chairperson	Mission	Current Focus
Minority Achievement Task Force Dr. Gwen Handy	To enlist support for our mission (to implement immediate and evident measures to address achievement for ALL, achievement gaps, and minority achievement, resulting in ALL students completing their program of study) that the community can provide.	Community Partnerships College Campus Visits Mentoring Tutoring Recognitions Education That Is Multicultural
High School Task Force Mr. Michael Johnson	To provide programs of study that enable students to graduate with the credentials necessary to continue their personal growth and development in college, or in a competitive fashion in the workforce.	High School Program of Study Advanced Placement Opportunities and Dual Enrollment Alignment with Middle and Elementary Level Programs Implementation of Common Core State Curriculum

<p>Middle School Task Force</p> <p>Mrs. Patricia Vickers</p>	<p>To offer appropriate experiences to the full range of middle school students, and to align the DCPS middle school program with elementary and high school programs.</p>	<p>Middle School Program of Study</p> <p>STEM Initiatives</p> <p>Alignment with High and Elementary Level Programs</p> <p>Implementation of Common Core State Curriculum</p>
<p>Elementary School Task Force</p> <p>Mrs. Regina Teat</p>	<p>To focus on specific achievement and behavioral issues in Dorchester County Elementary Schools through dialogue based on available resources, including best practice research and county policies and procedures.</p>	<p>Elementary Reading and Mathematics Programs</p> <p>Alignment with Middle and High Level Programs</p> <p>Implementation of Common Core State Curriculum</p>

Instructional Update – The Three Themes

As you are aware, the **three themes** to guide our work this year are:

- **Intervention rather than remediation** – Providing *just in time assistance* as soon as we know that there is a lack of appropriate mastery. This is **proactive**, as opposed to the reactive mode of remediating long-term deficits.
- **Infusing appropriate rigor at the elementary, middle, and high school levels** – Developing and implementing ways to insure that students are appropriately **challenged** each and every day.
- **Developing the profile of an independent learner at the elementary, middle, and high school levels** – Envisioning the attributes of a student who has the **reading stamina, reasoning ability, mastery of basic/advanced skills, and the confidence** to proceed as soon as possible with his/her own with learning.

To assist us in the pursuit of **instructional rigor**, **Mr. Hughes** has secured the assistance of **MindSteps**. This is one of our initiatives that is funded through the **Race to the Top** grant and is included in our **Breakthrough Center** leadership development activities. On **October 4**, leadership teams from each school will participate in a **Professional Learning Community** activity that will pursue these goals:

- To help school leaders to understand what rigor is and how they can integrate it across the district to improve teaching and learning.
- To help instructional leaders provide support and accountability that will increase rigorous and supportive instructional practices in the classroom.
- To help the district build a sustainable program to increase rigor across the district.

Instructional Update – Breakthrough Center Partnership

Speaking of our **Breakthrough Center Partnership with MSDE**, we are again enjoying the collaborative assistance of **Dr. Robert Glascock, Ms. Ann Glazer, Mr. Paul Dunford, Mr. Tony Anello, and Mr. Tom DeHart** as we pursue those **attributes of great leaders** that we have identified. This year, we are starting with a focus on **informal, non-evaluative classroom visits** and how they add to the instructional conversation. We thank our MSDE colleagues for their most valuable assistance to DCPS!

Instructional Update – September 16 Professional Development Day

It was a pleasure to visit the professional development activities at all levels during the September 16 professional development day, which focused on our implementation of the **Common Core Curriculum**. The various designs of this day were the direct work products of the **task forces** and specific efforts were made to craft parallel experiences throughout the county. What was especially gratifying was to see the degree of **positive engagement** in these **teacher-led discussions**. Congratulations to our leadership cadre for a very successful day!

The Power of Encouragement and Belief in Children

Recently, our granddaughter Caroline, who is in the seventh grade, called to tell us that her teacher had sent home a “**good note**.” The note detailed positive qualities that made Caroline a “pleasure to have in class.” I wish I could capture how excited and happy she was to have received this simple recognition. (We see her very regularly but she still had to call us right away!) This was a powerful reminder to me of the opportunity we educators have to **encourage children**. Letting them know we **believe** in them can make a critical difference for a lifetime.

Covey Reflection

*“Habit One, **Be Proactive**, is all about being a person of influence. Proactive people focus their efforts in their Circle of Influence. They work on the things they can do something about.”*

In my view, the *Circle of Influence* remains significant for educators, despite the many things over which we have little control.