Improving Results through Instructional Leadership

Virginia Department of Education
Division of Special Education and Student Services

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> **The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) provides free resources that all teachers should have available to them. People in special education leadership positions should provide information about the access and use of these state resources, in addition to the local resources.**

➢ Virginia Tiered System of Supports (VTSS)

The Virginia Tiered System of Supports (VTSS) is a multi-tiered framework for working with students that uses evidence-based practices and progress monitoring to improve academic and behavioral outcomes. It combines educational reform and systems change designed and implemented to improve learning for all students.
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/virginia_tiered_system_supports/index.shtml

- VTSS represents an integration of Response to Intervention for academic areas (RTI) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS).

- VTSS aligns with Indistar Indicators for School Improvement
  Required Indicators:

  o TA01 - The school uses an identification process for all students at risk of failing or in need of targeted interventions. (2931)
  o TA02 - The school uses a tiered, differentiated intervention process to assign research- based interventions aligned with the individual needs of identified students (the process includes a description of how interventions are selected and assigned to students as well as the frequency and duration of interventions for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students). (2932)
  o TA03 - The school uses a monitoring process (including a multidisciplinary team that meets regularly to review student intervention outcome data and identifies "triggers" and next steps for unsuccessful interventions) for targeted intervention students to ensure fidelity and effectiveness. (2933)

- VTSS is a continuum of instructional and positive behavioral strategies and evidenced-based interventions, with a tiered framework of more intensive supports matched with the needs of students as established by data. Leadership teams at the division and school levels work together to implement and monitor results against standards and objectives.

- Student Achievement: Interactive, Inc. examined student achievement in the 90 "division cohort" schools that had begun RTI in 2010-11 and compared them to otherwise similar propensity-score matched schools without the program. Student achievement in the division cohort schools was better than in the comparison schools: (1) at all three grade levels for English/language arts; (2) for four of the six grade level comparisons for math; and (3) for four of the six grade level comparisons in science. Achievement in the VTSS/RTI secondary schools was not yet as strong as in the lower grades. VTSS/RTI is being used by lower grades schools and with more fidelity than has so far been the case with high schools.

- Student Behavior and Instructional Time: Evaluative data from the four school division/school cohorts implementing PBIS (formerly Effective Schoolwide Discipline-"ESD"). In Virginia indicates that office referrals, in-school suspensions, and out-of-school suspensions have decreased for both general education and special education students. Instructional time has increased in participating schools.

- PBIS is a data-driven decision making framework for establishing the social culture and behavioral supports needed for a school to be an effective learning environment for all students.

- RTI is a data-driven decision making framework for establishing the academic supports needed for a school to be an effective learning environment for all students.

VTSS is a data-driven decision making approach for establishing the academic and behavioral supports needed for a school to be an effective learning environment (academic and behavior) for all students. However, participation in the VTSS should not delay a special education referral if a disability is suspected.
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/virginia_tiered_system_supports/response_intervention/special_ed_eligibility_faq.pdf

Guiding Questions for the Integration of Academic Instruction and Student Behavior:
(*Source - Dr. George Batsche, University of South Florida, VTSS presentation*)

1. What are the evidence-based instructional strategies that will attain the academic skill set?

2. What academic engagement behaviors will be necessary to translate the academic skill into academic performance?
3. What social/emotional behaviors are resources and obstacles to the skill and performance goals?
4. How will we match the instructional strategies with engagement factors?

➢ Instruction: Focus on Reading, Writing, and Mathematics

Virginia's Achievement Goals: By 2017 students with disabilities, grades 3-7 & high school, will reach the "All Students" proficiency objective.

> **2014 Starting Points**
> English/Reading: 36 point performance gap
> Mathematics: 24 point performance gap

➢ Reading & Writing Instruction

All special education teachers should know how to find and use the resources listed below that support the implementation of the English Standards of Learning (SOL). These resources are available at VDOE's Web site. There is a narrated version explaining how to find and use these resources on VDOE's *TeacherDirect* Web site, http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/teacher_direct/sol_library/index.shtml .

English SOL Instructional Materials and Professional Development:

- English Standards of Learning and Curriculum Framework , Blueprint
- English Standards of Learning Enhanced Scope and Sequence Sample Lesson Plans
- English SOL and VMAST Practice Items
- Online Writing Resources, prompts and writing checklist
- English Standards of Learning Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension Resources
- Progression Charts for Reading, Writing, Grammar, and Research
- English Performance Expectations
- PALS PreK - Grade 3 Resources and Early Literacy Instructional Videos
- English SOL Institutes Presentations and Lessons
- VDOE Resources Supporting the English Standards of Learning Training and Instructional Videos

VDOE English Instruction Contact Information:

- Tracy Fair Robertson, English Coordinator
  (804) 371-7585, Tracy.Robertson@doe.virginia.gov
- Thomas Santangelo, English/Reading Specialist

(804) 225-3203, Thomas.Santangelo@doe.virginia.gov
- Jackie Kelley, English Specialist
  (804) 786-2484, Jacquelyn.Kelley@doe.virginia.gov

Additional Reading & Writing Resources:
Reading Teacher Network for teachers of reading – lesson plans for three years, tools for reading instruction.   http://neuhaus.org/readingteachersnetwork/

Into the Book is a reading comprehension resource for K-4 students and teachers**.**
http://reading.ecb.org/

The Florida Center for Reading Research provides reviews of literacy programs.
www.fcrr.org

What Works Clearinghouse has information on research-based interventions.
http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/

Intervention Central has numerous resources to assist teachers who are using Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM). www.interventioncentral.com

Best Evidence Encyclopedia – Empowering Educators with Evidence on Proven Programs
http://www.bestevidence.org/

Suggestions for Addressing the Reading & Writing Achievement Gap:

1. Use explicit, systematic instruction
2. Be creative in the scheduling of staff and students
3. Find the time for the specialized instruction
4. Use research-based strategies, such as:
   - Writing- University of Kansas Writing strategies
   - Reading- Multi-sensory approach to reading remediation.

   These approaches can be taught in any classroom regular or special, elementary or secondary level with age and grade appropriate grade level content. They are closely aligned with SOL.

5. Consider assistive technology-digital text, alternate formats, speech to text and text to speech, etc.
6. Inclusion does not replace or override specialized instruction - must address areas of need in the IEP, including frequency, duration and instructional setting.

Priorities: What to Look For (*Adapted from English VDOE School Improvement presentation):*
   Elementary English:
- Integration of all strands of English (Reading and Writing should only be separated when necessary)

- Research and media literacy should be done on an ongoing and regular basis beginning at fourth grade
- Use of Paired Passages (fiction/nonfiction)
- Emphasis of nonfiction reading strategies
- Text-dependent questions
- Vocabulary study (text-based, phoneme-based, morpheme-based)
- Focus on building 21st century skills
- Thinking-Enhanced-Items (TEI)
- Use of VDOE SOL Resources
- Project-based learning incorporates all strands of English SOL

Secondary English:
- Integration of all strands of English- Reading and Writing should NOT be separated
- Research- should be done on an ongoing and regular basis
- Use of Paired Passages (fiction/nonfiction)
- Emphasis of nonfiction reading strategies
- Text- dependent questions
- Text-based vocabulary study
- Research components
- Incorporation of media literacy
- Focus on building 21st century skills
- Thinking-Enhanced-Items (TEI)
- Use of VDOE SOL Resources
- Project-based learning incorporates all strands of English SOL

➢ Mathematics Instruction

All special education teachers should know how to find and use the resources listed below that support the implementation of the mathematics Standards of Learning (SOL). These resources are available at VDOE's Web site. There is a narrated version explaining how to find and use these resources on VDOE's *TeacherDirect* Web site, http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/teacher_direct/sol_library/index.shtml .

Mathematics Testing and Instructional Resources:

- 2009 Mathematics Standards of Learning
- 2009 Mathematics Curriculum Framework
- Practice SOL Items
- Mathematics Instructional Resources
- Professional Development Resources
- Mathematics Instructional Resources
- ESS Sample Lesson Plans
- Instructional Videos
- Mathematics Vocabulary Word Wall Cards
- Also found under middle and high school resources:

- o Technical Assistance Guides for Algebra I SOL A.9 and Algebra II SOL A.11 – information and teaching strategies concerning new statistics standards in Algebra I and Algebra II
- o Algebra Readiness Initiative (ARI) Curriculum Companion – provides additional lessons for remediation/intervention

VDOE Mathematics Instruction Contact information:

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Christa Southall, Mathematics Specialist
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Additional Mathematics Resources:
Illuminations for Teaching Math: lesson plans, strategies, resources.
http://illuminations.nctm.org/

Library of Virtual Manipulatives**:** Utah State University's library of manipulatives, through the grades and the strands. http://nlvm.usu.edu/en/nav/index.html

What Works Clearinghouse has information on research-based interventions, including a review of elementary and middle school math programs. http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/

Intervention Central: has numerous resources to assist teachers who are using Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM). www.interventioncentral.com

Best Evidence Encyclopedia – Empowering Educators with Evidence on Proven Programs.
http://www.bestevidence.org/

Best Practices for Better Schools: Student Assessment Response to Intervention for Elementary- Middle Math.
http://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/Math_Intervention_blue.pdf

Mathematics Instruction for Students with Learning Disabilities or Difficulty Learning Mathematics.
http://www.centeroninstruction.org/files/Intensive%20Interventions%20for%20Students%20Struggling%20in%20Reading%20%26%20Math.pdf

Suggestions for Addressing the Mathematics Achievement Gap
(*Source: Mathematics Instruction for Students with Learning Disabilities or Difficulty Learning Mathematics: A Guide for Teachers, Center on Instruction*)

1. Teach students using explicit instruction on a regular basis.
2. Teach students using multiple instructional examples.

3. Have students verbalize decisions and solutions to a math problem.
4. Teach students to visually represent the information in the math problem.
5. Teach students to solve problems using multiple/heuristic strategies.
6. Provide ongoing formative assessment data and feedback to teachers.
7. Provide peer-assisted instruction to students.

Aligned Standards of Learning (ASOL) & VAAP Resources: http://www.ttaconline.org/
Example Resources:
1. Understanding ASOL & Curriculum Frameworks
2. Blended Curriculum
3. Literacy Ecological Inventory
4. Numeracy Ecological Inventory
5. Thematic Units Planning Form
6. ASOL- SOL Crosswalk
7. Reading, Mathematics, Science, & History/Social Science Sample Activities
8. Assistive Technology Resources
9. Instructional Strategies for Reading & Mathematics

➢ Graduation for College & Career Ready: Diploma Options

Vision: *All children will live, learn, work, and participate in the communities where they chose to live.*

All special education teachers should know how to find and use the resources listed below that support and help students and families plan for graduation and postsecondary education, training, and employment.

Secondary Transition: VDOE's Transition Services website provides support, information and resources designed to improve the outcomes of students with disabilities in transition from middle/secondary education to postsecondary education and employment. The key to successful transition is careful planning. Students must be actively involved in the planning process. http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/transition_svcs/index.shtml

Instruction - Academic and Career Plans: The Board of Education included in its 2009 revisions to the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia, (8 VAC-20-131-5 et seq) provisions for each middle and high school student to have a personal learning plan that aligns academic and career goals with the student's course of study.
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/graduation/academic_career_plan.shtml

Instruction - Graduation Requirements: A Virginia high school diploma signifies that the bearer has met proficiency standards established by the Board of Education in reading, writing, mathematics, science and history. The resources listed explain Virginia's

graduation requirements and the many options now available to students for earning a high school diploma. Information is also available on how students can get even more out of their high school experience by accepting the challenge of advanced courses. http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/graduation/

Instruction - Credit Accommodations: Credit accommodations allow students with disabilities alternate pathways to the standard diploma. Many of the guidelines expand current practices and allow school divisions more flexibility. http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/graduation/credit_accommodations.shtml

College and Career Ready: To prepare Virginia's students for postsecondary education or to meet employers' expectations of candidates for entry-level jobs, VDOE is looking for ways to increase students' readiness for the future. http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/college_career_readiness/

Career and Technical Education (CTE): Pathways to college and Career Readiness: Career Clusters help students investigate careers and design their courses of study to advance their career goals. For this reason, Virginia has adopted the nationally accepted structure of career clusters, career pathways and sample career specialties or occupations. Based on the skills sets taught, all CTE courses are aligned with one or more career clusters and career pathways. http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/career_clusters

Dropout Prevention: National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities (NDPC-SD) was established to assist in building states' capacity to increase school completion rates for students with disabilities. The goal of this center is to provide high quality evidence-based technical assistance to help states build and implement sustainable programs and best practices that will yield positive results in dropout prevention, reentry and school completion for students with disabilities. http://www.ndpc-sd.org/

Coalition for a College and Career Ready America: The Coalition is a collective of more than 100 like-minded organizations committed to engaging with federal, state, and local policy leaders to increase U.S. K-12 student performance, raise high school graduation rates, and ensure that America's education system prepares all students for college and today's workplace. http://collegeandcareerreadyamerica.org/resources

School Improvement Leadership: The Center for Education Leadership has developed a reservoir of resources and relationships to advance school improvement. The *Rigor/Relevance Framework* is used in schools across the country and around the world to make instruction and assessment more rigorous and more relevant for all students. The *Learning Criteria* can help a school better define how well it is meeting the needs of all learners by looking at the whole school and the whole student. www.leadered.com/about.html

College Success: This Web site contains information about living college life with a disability. It is designed for high school students and provides video clips, activities and

additional resources that can help a person get a head start in planning for college. Interviews with college students with disabilities from across Virginia provide key information. These video clips offer a way for middle and high school students to hear firsthand from students with disabilities who have been successful. www.going-to-college.org

Virginia's Community College System: Virginia's Community Colleges commit to increasing access to affordable education and training for more individuals so they acquire the knowledge and skills to be successful in an ever-changing global economy. You will find information on Middle College, Career Coaches and Workforce Development. http://www.vccs.edu

Work Support: Work Support provides webinars and webcasts on innovative programs aimed at assisting people with disabilities to attend college. *Search words: College and Career Ready* http://www.worksupport.com
Work Support also provides webinars, webcasts and articles on innovative programs aimed at assisting young people with disabilities to seek postsecondary education and training programs that lead to competitive employment.
Search words: Employment, Training, ACE-IT, Project SEARCH, Customized Employment http://worksupport.com/innovative/

Career One Stop: This site provides a pathway to career information and tools for all job seekers and service providers. A person can explore careers, the education and training required for certain careers, as well as how to write a resume. The site has interactive functions as well. http://www.careeronestop.org/

Job Accommodation: The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is the leading source of free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues. Working toward practical solutions that benefit both employer and employee, JAN helps people with disabilities enhance their employability, and shows employers how to capitalize on the value and talent that people with disabilities add to the workplace. http://askjan.org/

Postsecondary Outcomes: The Zarrow Center for Learning Enrichment facilitates successful secondary and postsecondary educational, vocational and personal outcomes for students and adults with disabilities. ZC faculty, staff, and students do this through self-determination oriented evaluation, research, development, transition education instruction, and dissemination of best educational and support practices. www.ou.edu/content/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow.html

Employment Information for Youth: NCWD/Youth is a source for information about employment and youth with disabilities. Experts in disability, education, employment, and workforce development provide relevant resources of high quality. There are sections on youth development, workforce, and innovative strategies. The publication, *Guideposts for Success* is a gem. http://www.ncwd-youth.info

Self-Determination: This site engaging and practical site holds useful information to encourage all children to participate in their learning and education planning. The hallmark activities are One- pagers, Good Day Plans, Goal Setting and Attainment. Each has a template (soon to be apps) supporting the development of the self-determination tools. All templates are supported by short video clips. Lesson plans, called Life Lines are available and are aligned with SOL. The old paper Transition Slide Guide has been transformed into an electronic document and has found a home on this site. Applications for events like the Youth and Parent Summit are found on this site. www.imdetermined.org

Graduation Data: This site contains state and division level data on graduation rates. Customized reports can also be created going back to 2003-2004.
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/graduation_completion/index.shtml

State Performance Plan- Annual Report Data: School Division level data can be viewed based on federal indicators collected through special education and reported to the public in the State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report. A division may also view its post school survey results through the Work Support site.
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/reports_plans_stats/special_ed_performance/index.shtml