

PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE *DESIGN FOR EXCELLENCE*:

A Response to the PDK Curriculum Management Audit and the NSPRA Communications Audit

Presented: May, 2008

Adopted:

Description: This issue brief will provide a justification and specific proposal for revising the CCPS six-year plan in spring, 2008.

Justification: The CCPS School Board adopted the *Design for Excellence*, the school division's six-year plan for continuous improvement and vision achievement, in December 2007. In January 2008, the School Board received the report of the curriculum management audit conducted by Phi Delta Kappa, and, in February 2008, the report of the communications audit conducted by the National School Public Relations Association. The Executive Team has analyzed each and agreed upon strategies needed to address the findings and implement the recommendations appropriately for CCPS.

To continue the school system's work to have a single unified plan to direct change and improvement, it is proposed that the initiatives needed to respond to the two audits be included in the *Design for Excellence*. The proposed "Revisions to the *Design for Excellence*" would both document and drive the strategies to meet the needs identified by PDK and NSPRA and agreed upon by the Executive Staff.

Findings/Recommendations of the Audits: Following are the actual findings/ recommendations of the two studies. (Note: Findings of the Curriculum Management Audit were analyzed and synthesized to generate strategies for improvement best aligned to the needs, values and expectations for CCPS; recommendations of the Communication Audit were adopted as strategies.)

Communication Audit Recommendations

- Recommendation 1: Stop and assess how your current communication products and services are meeting the changing needs of your division
- Recommendation 2: Develop a strategic communication plan
- Recommendation 3: Establish a Key Communicator or Opinion Leader Network
- Recommendation 4: Continue to develop and expand public engagement or outreach strategies
- Recommendation 5: Improve internal communication
- Recommendation 6: Regularly train staff in communication

- Recommendation 7: Enhance your e-communication
- Recommendation 8: Improve communication with diverse populations
- Recommendation 9: Brand the look of CCPS communication vehicles
- Recommendation 10: Enhance media relationships and results
- Recommendation 11: Expand communication with the non-parent public

Curriculum Management Audit Findings

- Finding 1.1: Board policies are inadequate to provide local curriculum management direction and to establish quality control of the educational program and organizational functions.
- Finding 1.2: Division, School, and department planning occurs throughout the system. School improvement plans are aligned with the Division plan, but departmental planning efforts vary in quality, are not tightly connected, and are mixed in their ability to promote change.
- Finding 1.3: The table of organization does not meet all audit criteria for sound organizational design. Job descriptions are generally adequate to provide clear role definitions; however, not all job descriptions are current and accurate.
- Finding 1.4: Performance evaluations do not comply with Virginia law and do not provide adequate feedback to guide sound personnel decisions or to improve student achievement.
- Finding 2.1: Many components of sound curriculum management planning are in place. However, there is no comprehensive curriculum management plan to provide coordinated direction for the design, delivery, and evaluation of the curriculum
- Finding 2.2: the scope of the written curriculum is adequate to direct instruction in Grades K-5, but inadequate in Grades 6-12.
- Finding 2.3: Curriculum guides and resources are inadequate to support instruction for student learning and meet the local expectations related to high stakes assessments and future success.
- Finding 2.4: Programs are neither designed not effectively implemented and evaluated system-wide to provide alignment with the curriculum and to support high student achievement.

- Findings 3.1: The Division offers many professional development opportunities, but the program is inadequate to meet audit standards for quality. There is no formalized plan to guide and prioritize the training activities or to provide follow-up support, monitoring, and evaluation of impact.
- Findings 3.2: Most classroom observations conducted by auditors did not reflect the Division's stated expectations for classroom instructional practices.
- Findings 3.3: Inequalities impeding student achievement exist in program access and comparability of participation by race and gender. Staff and student demographics reflect imbalance in racial representation among staff.
- Finding 4.1: While some examples of student assessment and program evaluation exist, a Division assessment plan is not formalized, resulting in an incomplete system for the purpose of providing consistent and ongoing feedback for the improvement of student learning and the evaluation of program effectiveness.
- Finding 4.2: The scope of assessment is inadequate to monitor student achievement in all areas of the curriculum and at all grade levels.
- Finding 4.3: Overall student achievement on the state tests is at or above the state average on most tests in most grade levels. Not all groups of students are achieving at equally high levels.
- Finding 4.4: Data use is an emerging practice in the Division. Many administrators and teachers use data to inform the instructional process and to assess student mastery of the Standards of Learning.
- Finding 5.1: Budget development and allocation decisions are not driven by the Design for Excellence goals and School Division strategic priorities; cost benefit analysis is not possible, given the lack of targeted productivity assessments.
- Finding 5.2: Program interventions to improve student achievement lack measurable performance objectives and evaluation plans necessary to determine their need and/or effectiveness.
- Finding 5.3: Long-range facility planning is adequate; however, overcrowding continues to present serious challenges to the effective delivery of the educational program and services that support the curriculum.

Proposal: The Executive Team finds that the *Design for Excellence*, as adopted in December, adequately addresses many of the findings, conclusions and recommendations made in the two reports. The attached annotated copy of the plan highlights sections of the adopted plan in green that address the intent of the two reports and references the specific audit finding or recommendation addressed.

However, the Executive Team finds that several issues of the two reports require an additional goal be added to the plan. The new goal of **Effective System Management** would contain the recommendations that address broad organizational improvement, such as policy development, planning, and internal and external communication, called for in the reports. The proposed Goal 5 with objectives, strategies and annual actions is also included in the annotated copy of the plan attached herein, with the following objectives:

- Objective 5.1 Develop and implement a timeline and process for policy development with supporting administrative regulations and develop and adopt a schedule for periodic updating and revision with the School Board (*CMA finding 1.1*)

- Objective 5.2 Develop a comprehensive plan for curriculum, instruction, and assessment management system with appropriate and explicit links to system-wide plans for staff and leadership development and program evaluation, that supports accountability to and decision-making by the Board and Superintendent on system effectiveness (*CMA findings 2.1; 3.1; 4.1; 4.2*)

- Objective 5.3 Revise the budget process to ensure its alignment with the division's six-year plan (*CMA finding 5.1*)

- Objective 5.4 Strengthen departmental planning to enhance central departments' ability to support the division's six-year plan, school improvement, and student achievement, and streamline the school improvement planning process to focus on problem-solving between and among principals and central support staff (*CMA finding 1.2*)

- Objective 5.5 Develop and implement the means to provide regular and consistent guidance and evaluation results to the direction and decisions about intervention, remediation and acceleration programs offered at the school or division level (*CMA findings 2.4; 5.2*)

- Objective 5.6 Update the facility and capital improvement plans, working with the county administration to more effectively address growth issues (*CMA finding 5.3*)

- Objective 5.7 Strengthen and expand communication systematically with internal and external stakeholders (*CA Recommendations 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7*)

Additionally, the Executive Team finds that several **key measures** need to be added to adequately monitor the extended plan, and targets need to be established on several previously adopted key measures.

New key measures being proposed are:

1. Advanced Pass Rates on SOL assessments: In order to achieve a score of 500 or better on these tests, students must correctly answer more questions that require thinking at higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy, including analysis and evaluation. These skills are essential 21st century skills and reinforce the achievement of the vision.
2. Attendance rate: The School Board spent considerable time with the community establishing an attendance policy for the school division. While the new policy appears to be having the desired effect, attendance is a component of the core value of responsibility and as such should be continuously monitored.

Previously adopted key measures for which targets are being proposed are highlighted in green on the attached table of key measures and targets, and include reduced childhood obesity, on-line learning, a separate measure for industry certifications, and others.

The attached chart shows:

- ❑ Previously adopted key measures and targets
- ❑ Previously adopted key measures and proposed targets
- ❑ New key measures being proposed and proposed targets

Next Steps and Timeline: The Board is asked to review this proposal, which is scheduled for discussion in the May work session; adoption of the changes in June would be optimal.