



Good afternoon Chairman Edwards and Vice Chair Anderson, members of the School Board, and Dr. Spence. As the chair of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee or SPISC, I am here to provide a brief update on progress as it relates to our work on Compass to 2015. I am joined by my colleagues who currently serve on SPISC.

The SPISC team is responsible for identifying and overseeing the implementation of key strategies associated with the strategic objectives in *Compass to 2015*. SPISC members meet monthly throughout the school year and over the summer to monitor progress and make adjustments as needed. Apart from these monthly meetings, the co-chairs meet with the action teams comprised of central office administrators as well as building administrators, teachers, and specialists. Membership of the teams depends on the issue or issues being addressed by the Strategic Objective Action Teams.

"Unless commitment is made, there are only promises and hopes, but no plans."  
--Peter F. Drucker

**Strategic Objective 1**

**Engage Every Student**

Amy Cashwell and Daniel Smith

**Strategic Objective 2**

**Balanced Assessment**

Lesley Hughes and Matthew Delaney

**Strategic Objective 3**

**Improved Achievement**

Jobynia Caldwell, George Parker,  
Freddie Alarcon and Sean Walker

**Strategic Objective 4**

**Create Opportunities**

Kathy O'Hara and Larry Ames

**Strategic Objective 5**

**Capacity Building**

Shirann Lewis, Daniel Keever and  
Brian Matney

**Additional Members**

Sheila Magula, Don Robertson and  
Lisa Banicky

**Strategic Plan Implementation  
Steering Committee (SPISC)**



For the benefit of the new School Board members, I want to take just a moment to introduce the members of the team.

Objective 1 – focuses on teachers engaging students in meaningful and rigorous work through innovative instructional practices and supportive technologies and is co-chaired by Amy Cashwell, chief academic officer from the Department of Teaching and Learning, and Daniel Smith, principal of Princess Anne High School.

Objective 2 – focuses on developing and implementing a balanced assessment system and is co-chaired by Lesley Hughes, executive director of elementary teaching and learning, and Matthew Delaney, principal of Larkspur Middle School.

Objective 3 – focuses on improving achievement for all students while closing achievement gaps for identified groups and is co-chaired by Jobynia Caldwell, director of equity affairs; George Parker, assistant superintendent for high schools, Freddie Alarcon, principal of Corporate Landing Middle School, and Sean Walker, principal of Alanton Elementary School.

Objective 4 – focuses on creating opportunities for parents and the community to fulfill their essential roles in supporting student achievement and is co-chaired by Kathy O'Hara, chief media and communications officer, and Larry Ames, director of custodial services.

Objective 5 – focuses on developing essential leaders, teacher, and staff competencies and is co-chaired by Shirann Lewis, assistant superintendent for elementary schools; Daniel Keever, principal of Salem High School; and Brian Matney, principal of Landstown High School.

While the Board adopted the new strategic framework that will be implemented at the close of this school year, we remain committed to the work of *Compass to 2015*. We believe there will be a natural progression between the current strategic plan and *Compass to 2020: Charting the Course*.

# Commitment to Monitoring Progress

## ☐ Formal Reporting

- Mid-Year and End-of-Year Updates
- School Board Workshops



## ☐ Informal Reporting

- Compass Keepers Recognitions
- Compass Showcase

## ☐ Identified Priority Areas

- Identified annually (2009 – 2013)
- Identified for final two years of the plan (2013 – 2015)

“Commitment is an act, not a word.”

—Jean-Paul Sartre



Since the inception of *Compass to 2015*, the School Board has received formal reports of progress in the form of presentations and reports referred to as the “Blue Master.” In addition to regular updates mid-way through the year and at the end of the year, the School Board also engages in workshops related to key initiatives of *Compass to 2015*. This year, there were several separate workshops related to balanced assessment including updates on the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD test for schools), the College Work Readiness Assessment Plus (CWRA+), as well as standards-based grading.

In addition to formal reports, we have sought ways to recognize individuals’ and schools’ progress and contributions to furthering the work of *Compass to 2015*. One such way is through the identification of Compass Keepers – students, staff, and community partners who daily help VBCPS get closer to reaching the goal and objectives outlined in the strategic plan. The pictures featured in this presentation are of some of the individuals identified as Compass Keepers over the past few years.

We also recently featured the work of our schools at the Compass Showcase event held in November at Kellam High School. If you have not already done so, I would encourage you to visit the Compass Showcase website where you can find a brief description for all the participating schools along with additional resources that highlight how schools have moved the work of *Compass to 2015* forward.

Over the years of reporting progress related to the strategic plan, the SPISC members have annually shared what they identified as priority areas for the next school year. In July of 2013, knowing that the time under *Compass to 2015* was drawing to a close, the SPISC members identified priority areas that would address the final two years of the plan. At this point I will provide you with brief updates on progress related to these priorities.

# Commitment to Literacy

"When you're surrounded by people who share a passionate commitment around a common purpose, anything is possible."

--Howard Schultz

☐ Comprehensive divisionwide literacy initiative

☐ Site-based literacy plans



The first area we will look at is our ongoing commitment to providing challenging literacy instruction for all students across the curriculum. During the 2013-2014 school year, action teams worked to review, refine, and refocus the school division's definition of and vision for the role of literacy. This resulted in the identification of goals and objectives, a template for site-based literacy plans, and the provision of division resources to support these efforts. The division literacy plan was shared with staff in the summer and fall of 2014, and work is ongoing as we investigate additional assessments and interventions for struggling students at the secondary level and address the skills required for performance-based literacy tasks.

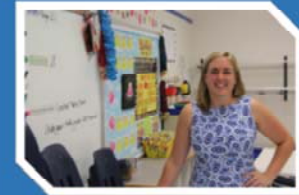
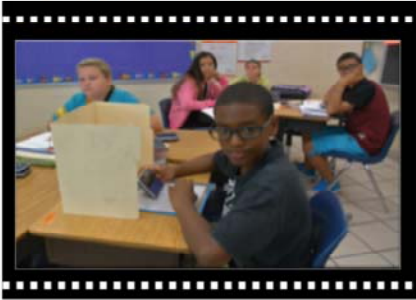
A critical component of the divisionwide literacy initiative is the site-based literacy plan that all schools are asked to develop, implement, and monitor. Principals received an introduction to the site-based literacy plan along with a planning template and resources at the start of the 2014 school year. Since then, Teaching and Learning has provided professional development for all principals in September and January and has offered numerous support sessions for site-based literacy teams as they work to implement literacy across the curriculum.



# Commitment to Balanced Assessment

## □ RediStep Assessment

## □ Balanced Assessment Video Series



Next is our commitment to a balanced assessment system. As you may recall, the RediStep assessment for eighth graders was put into place this year to replace the EXPLORE assessment which is no longer available for use. RediStep measures the skills students need to be on track for success in college and careers. As part of the implementation plan for RediStep, school improvement specialists received training. And schools were provided with directions for updating Individual Education Plans to reflect the assessment and for making the accommodations necessary for special education students. The assessment was administered in October and parents received notification that the Explore assessment would be replaced by the RediStep assessment via a letter and AlertNow communications. Middle school guidance counselors participated in professional development to assist them in providing results to students, teachers, and parents. The assessment results have been forwarded to the schools for distribution and guidance counselors will meet with 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to discuss their results. The Strategic Objective 2 subcommittee will meet this semester to examine any instructional implications resulting from the RediStep results.

Work was completed on two new videos for the Balanced Assessment Parent Video Series; one focused on the RediStep assessment and the other on summative assessments. Both videos were designed to communicate the purposes and instructional implications of the assessments.

One of the existing balanced assessment videos, the Standards-Based Grading video, was updated to reflect this year's change to the grade 4 report card as fourth grade students no longer receive traditional letter grades in addition to the proficiency ratings. Grade 5 will continue to receive both letter grades and proficiency ratings for this school year.

# Commitment to Responding to Student Needs

"Individual commitment to a group effort—that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work."  
—Vince Lombardi



- Transition activities and programs for students
- Phasing in of the Responding to Student Needs Model (RSNM)
- Addressing achievement gaps

The commitment to responding to student needs is the next area of focus. Members of the Strategic Objective 3 Action Team identified elementary schools with exemplary transition programs for kindergarten students. Information about the successful elements of programs at New Castle and Malibu elementary schools was shared with the other elementary schools and the recommendation was made that all schools should offer at least two transition programs each year in addition to the orientation programs typically offered in late summer.

On another student front, the Beach Girls Rock program began its second year. This transition program is designed for 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade girls to learn about multiple pathways to careers. More than 150 girls from around the city attended the November event.

We are continuing to phase in the Responding to Student Needs Model with respect to achievement as well as behavior. For example, the Schoolnet Interventions tool was made available to every school in the division. Some schools are using the tool to identify students who may need interventions, to create intervention plans, and to monitor student progress. In addition, a three-part video series was created to guide schools as they navigate and explore this new tool.

With respect to addressing behavior, Positive Behavioral and Instruction Supports (PBIS) has expanded to three additional schools beyond the original cohort grant which included Strawbridge Elementary, Plaza Middle, and Green Run, Cox and Kempsville high. The schools added this year are Bayside Elementary, Bayside 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Campus, and Bayside Middle School. Two full days of training were provided for both cohorts this fall.

And finally, there is a multi-tiered approach to closing the achievement gap which includes the collaboration of several departments such as School Leadership which monitors all school Plans for Continuous Improvement; Planning, Innovation, and Accountability which provide data and training; and the Office of Equity Affairs which is examining discipline data and monitoring the progress of PBIS schools while continuing its efforts to provide students leadership experiences at various levels.

# Commitment to Parent and Community Engagement



“Stay committed to your decisions, but stay flexible in your approach.”

—Tom Robbins



The work of the Strategic Objective 4 Action Team this year has been largely fueled by the results of a parent survey completed last February. What we heard was that parents had a strong preference for receiving information electronically and that school websites needed improving. As a result of the survey, targeted strategies have been implemented. They included:

- The addition of a text messaging feature through the AlertNow system. This feature can be used by schools and the division to send out reminders about events, activities and other initiatives. It will be valuable during instances of inclement weather and emergencies too. Understanding that electronic communications is a preference, Media and Communications' Office of Community Engagement initiated daily parent “e-tips” that are emailed, tweeted and posted on Facebook. In addition, an electronic parent newsletter for each level – elementary, middle, and high -- is emailed monthly. Media and Communications also has added a “Parent” tab to its online newsblog *The Core*.
- A team of school webmasters and administrators did a massive redesign of the school website templates. At the end of the 2014 calendar year, all 86 school websites migrated to the new look. For example, this is Fairfield Elementary School’s website prior to the migration and this is what it looks like now.
- A new online volunteer management database was launched this fall.



This database not only allows the school division to track the service hours of its valuable volunteers, but it also helps match volunteer interest with the needs of schools.

In other action, the focus will continue on the quality parent programming that earned VBCPS a Magna Award from the National School Boards Association and American School Board Journal. *First Impression Training* will be offered second semester for identified groups of non-school based employees with plans to open the training to additional staff in the future. The goal is to continue to encourage a welcoming atmosphere for parents and the community.



# Commitment to Capacity Building

"Desire is the key to motivation, but it's determination and commitment to an unrelenting pursuit of your goal – a commitment to excellence – that will enable you to attain the success you seek."  
--Mario Andretti



## ☐ Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation System

## ☐ Professional Learning

- LEAD Virginia Beach
- Instructional Teacher Assistants

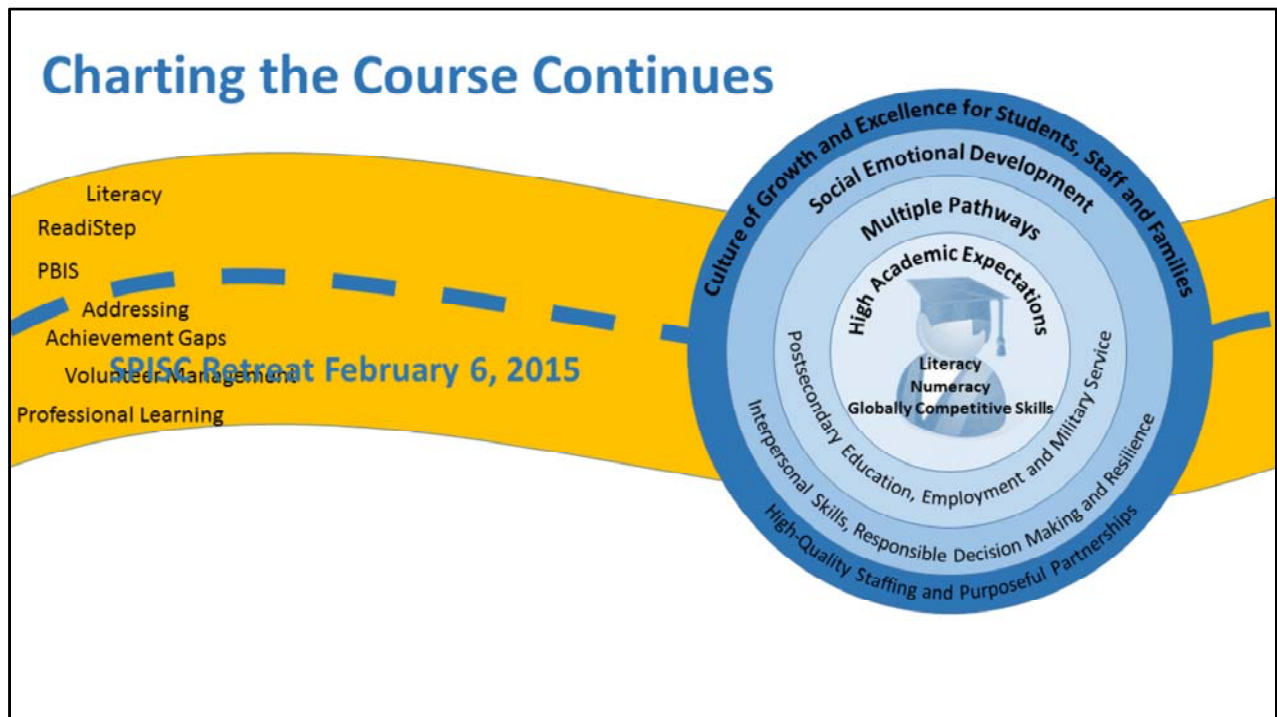
## ☐ Collaborative Learning Culture Framework

The final commitment we will report on tonight involves capacity building across the division. The Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation system continues to be monitored with input from the departments of School Leadership, Teaching and Learning, Human Resources, and select principals and assistant principals. As a result of feedback from the initial implementation year, several changes were made for 2014-2015 including adjustments to due dates and to the requirements in the formative cycle of the evaluation process. Moving forward, stakeholders will continue to be offered opportunities to suggest revisions.

The LEAD Virginia Beach program of professional learning and training for current and aspiring school administrators continues to grow in scope and participation. A second aspiring administrators cohort was launched in October and the aspiring principal leadership program is in the design phase. Current administrators from all 3 levels have participated in systemic and focused professional learning sessions through the summer Administrators' Conference, League meetings, and other optional sessions.

Development of a comprehensive professional learning plan for instructional teacher assistants remains a priority area. There has been training for our teacher assistants with regard to the autism spectrum. That said, more specific plans for systemwide training are taking shape.

Finally, the Collaborative Learning Culture Framework – available to all employee groups through the intranet – is a cataloged collection of electronic resources framed around the 4 critical questions of professional learning communities. The collection expanded quickly as *Compass to 2015* took flight. As we transition to *Compass to 2020*, we will be reviewing, aligning, and potentially re-packaging information available on the site.



Hopefully our commitment to the work and the connections between what we have been engaging in and the work that lies ahead under **Compass to 2020** have been made evident in today's workshop.

Next month the SPISC committee will participate in a retreat to re-examine roles and begin the process of identifying critical paths forward for key areas of the new strategic framework. This work will continue to place an emphasis on stakeholder input and feedback.

This concludes the mid-year update. My colleagues and I are available to answer any questions that you may have.



## Keeping Our Commitments to Compass

A Mid-Year Update on *Compass to 2015*  
Presentation to the School Board  
January 20, 2015