Achievement Gap Initiative
At Harvard University

Getting It Done:
Raising Achievement and Closing Gaps in Whole School Systems: Recent Advances in Research and Practice
Survival of Public Schooling

“If public schools survive, leaders will look very different from the way they presently look, both in who leads and what these leaders do.”

School Reform from the Inside Out
Dr. Richard Elmore
Richmond City Schools

- 24,247 Students
- 88.3% Black
- 7.1% White
- 3.7% Hispanic
- 1.0% Asian/Indian

- 20% Exceptional Education
- 74% Economically Disadvantaged
Richmond City Schools

- 29 Elementary Schools
- 9 Middle Schools
- 8 High Schools
- 5 Alternative/Exceptional Schools
Richmond Public Schools

- Average School Sizes
  - Elementary: 430 students
  - Middle: 648 students
  - High: 789 students
RICHMOND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Vision
A premier learning community that is the first choice for ALL in Richmond and recognized nationally for student excellence.

Mission
Educate ALL students to become highly successful, contributing citizens in a global society.
Virginia Accountability

Schools receive two ratings based on the performance of students on Virginia’s Standards of Learning Assessments (SOL).

**Accreditation** – the overall achievement in English, mathematics, science, and history. 70% benchmark for all students.

**Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)** – goals established by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). Based on the overall achievement and achievement by student subgroups in reading and mathematics. Currently 77% for reading and 75% for mathematics increasing to 100% by 2013-2014.
Framework for Action

Focus the district on its primary goal – Student Learning

☐ Acknowledge the “Brutal Facts”
Accept the Brutal Facts!

- RPS viewed as 2\textsuperscript{nd} lowest performing school district in Virginia
- Need to meet VA Accreditation Standards
- Need to meet Federal Mandates – NCLB
Accept the Brutal Facts!

- Incremental District Gains
- Choice for Parents ~ “Boutique” Schools
- Many content with examples of Individual Achievement & Excellence
- Intuitive Decision Making
- Decentralized school system
- Lack of Accountability
Framework for Action
Focus the district on its primary goal – Student Learning

☐ Acknowledge the “Brutal Facts”
☐ Create a Sense of Urgency
Create a Sense of Urgency

- The journey begins – 2002!
- Status quo no longer acceptable
- **Call to Excellence**: Move from slow, incremental gains to demonstrated competence.
Framework for Action

Focus the district on its primary goal – Student Learning

☐ Acknowledge the “Brutal Facts”
☐ Create a Sense of Urgency
☐ Design and implement systemic improvement strategies
Design and Implement Systemic Improvement Strategies

No one person turns around a school district.

The leadership for the strategic improvement strategies we used in RPS was cultivated from every sector of the district.
Charting The Course

- A comprehensive accountability process
- On-going monitoring of schools’ progress toward achieving specified objectives
- Formative & Summative Assessments
- Data driven instructional decision-making
- “Real-time” feedback and prescriptive remedial strategies
Charting the Course Document

- **Purpose of the Document**
  - Provides data for analyzing school & student performance over time
    - 3-year trends
    - Disaggregated data from prior school year
  - “Drives” the instructional plan for the year
    - Identification of strengths & weaknesses
    - Instructional conversations with staff
    - Targeted staff development
  - Provides current data for monitoring progress
Charting the Course Document

- Snapshot Data
  - 3-Year Trends & Last Year’s SOL Data
    - Test Results
    - Discipline Referrals
    - Percent of Attendance
  - Review of Disaggregated Data
    - AYP
    - SOL Subgroup Results
    - “34” Reports
    - Discipline Infractions
Charting the Course Document

- Ongoing Data Collection
  - Bi-Weekly Data
    - **Elementary (K-5)**
      - English/Reading, Mathematics, Science, Social Science
    - **Middle (6-8)**
      - English, Mathematics, Algebra I, Geometry, Science, Earth Science, History/Social Science
    - **High (9-12)**
Albert H. Hill Middle School
(2006-2007 Statistics)

- 486 Students
- 85% Black
- 13% White
- 1% Hispanic
- 1% Asian/Indian
- 28% Exceptional Education
- 70% Economically Disadvantaged
The Deming/Shewhart Improvement Cycle

1. Study
2. Plan
3. Do
4. Act

Plan → Do → Act → Study → Plan
Types of Data We Collect

- Assessment Data
- Program Data
- Demographic Data
What is a Spreadsheet?

- A spreadsheet is the computer equivalent of a paper ledger sheet. It consists of a grid made from columns and rows. It is an environment that can make number manipulation easy and somewhat painless.
## Graphs

![Graphs](image)

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<td>67%</td>
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<td>98</td>
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<td>124</td>
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<td>67%</td>
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<td>Sem Grade</td>
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<td>67%</td>
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<td>Disadvantaged</td>
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<td>77%</td>
<td>73%</td>
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<td>72%</td>
<td>71%</td>
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<td>Walker Algebra</td>
<td>95.5%</td>
<td>64</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Walker Geometry</td>
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<td>65%</td>
<td>65%</td>
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<td>3rd 9 Weeks</td>
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### 6th & 9th Grade English Mastery

- **Pass Rate**:
  - 1st 9 Weeks: 39.5%
  - Semester: 62.4%
  - 3rd 9 Weeks: 72%

- **Fail Rate**:
  - 1st 9 Weeks: 49%
  - Semester: 22%
  - 3rd 9 Weeks: 81%

- **Total**:
  - 66%

### Grade Level Average

- 1st 9 Weeks: 57%
- Semester: 77%
- 3rd 9 Weeks: 71%
Framework for Action
Focus the district on its primary goal – Student Learning

- Acknowledge the “Brutal Facts”
- Create a Sense of Urgency
- Design and implement systemic improvement strategies
- Provide Capacity Building Professional Development
Building & Sustaining Capacity Instructional Staff

- Developing capacity building, differentiated professional development for instructional staff

Initial Focus

- Data Analysis
- Use of student data for instructional decisions
- Strategies for accelerating achievement and providing “real time” interventions
Capacity Building
Professional Development

Theory of Action:
Managed Instruction

- A well-articulated, research-based curriculum aligned PreK-12
  - Curriculum Compass
  - Curriculum Treasure Chest
- Utilization of district-wide instructional model
Framework for Action
Focus the district on its primary goal – Student Learning

- Acknowledge the “Brutal Facts”
- Create a Sense of Urgency
- Design and implement systemic improvement strategies
- Provide Capacity Building Professional Development
- Restructure and Align Organization
Restructure and Align Organization

- Move from decentralized to centralized instruction and accountability
- Implementation with fidelity throughout the school district
Framework for Action
Focus the district on its primary goal – Student Learning

- Implement Systemic Accountability
Implement Systemic Accountability

The Balanced Scorecard

EMPLOYEES AND ORG CAPACITY
- Goals
- Objectives

INTERNAL BUSINESS PROCESSES
- Goals
- Objectives

VISION & MISSION

STUDENTS, CUSTOMERS AND STAKEHOLDERS
- Goals
- Objectives

FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVE
- Goals
- Objectives

The Balanced Scorecard
Balanced Scorecard

- Aligns vision, mission and goals with strategic objectives
- Uses “Project Charter” to focus work of district on priorities
- Provides feedback on internal instructional and business processes
- Monitors progress and reports external outcomes
Making the Connection
District to School

Balance Scorecard

Charting the Course

School Improvement Plan
Framework for Action

Focus the district on its primary goal – Student Learning

- Implement Systemic Accountability
- Forge Strategic Partnerships
Framework for Action

Focus the district on its primary goal – Student Learning

- Implement Systemic Accountability
- Forge Strategic Partnerships
- Document the Journey
RPS
2002 ~ 2007

RESULTS
Academic Achievement
Significant Improvement!

86% met State Accreditation; 100% HS and 93% ES
80% of schools made AYP
Percent of Schools Meeting Federal & State Benchmarks

R E S U L T S

SOL
NCLB

2003 2004 2005 2006 2007
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<th>Class of 2006</th>
<th>Class of 2007</th>
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<td>NCLB</td>
<td>48.9%</td>
<td>54.3% (+5.4%)</td>
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<td>HS Comp.</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
<td>67.2% (+11.7%)</td>
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Building & Sustaining Capacity
Instructional Staff

- Building “learning communities” in each school

Complementary Focus
- Core of expert “lead teachers” in each school
- Expanded “induction” process for incoming teachers
Building & Sustaining Capacity
Instructional Staff

- Shared mission, vision, and values
- Collaborative work
- Collective inquiry
- Action orientation and experimentation
- Commitment to continuous improvement/mastery learning
- Outcome oriented
Building & Sustaining Capacity Administrative & Support Staff

- Targeted professional development for non-instructional administrative and support staff

Focus

- Clarity about #1 district goal – student achievement
- Improve effectiveness and efficiency
- Realign resources to support instructional initiatives
Building & Sustaining Capacity
School Board

- RPS School Board

- Professional Development at UVA
- Support of CGSC Audit Findings and Recommendations
- Focus on Memorandum of Understanding with VADOE
Developing High Quality Workforce

Getting The Right People On The Bus

- Recruitment, training, and retention of highly qualified teachers and staff through the combined efforts of RPS and the business community.
Community Collaboration

- Establishment of partnerships with businesses, communities of faith, universities and other entities in all schools to enhance student achievement and post-secondary preparedness
RPS REFORMS
Fiscal Reform

- An increasing percentage of the total budget allocated for teaching and learning on a yearly basis
- Consolidation of 6 schools
Touchstones on the Journey!

- Blue Ribbon Schools
- Distinguished Title I Schools
- Milliken Award Winner
- All High Schools Fully Accredited
- US News & World Report – High Schools
- National & State Recognitions for Excellence in Student Achievement
Challenges
Cost for Educating RPS Students

- FY06* $12,219 per pupil cost
  - 76.0% Instruction
  - 11.4% Operations & Maintenance
  - 3.9% Transportation
  - 3.7% Food Services
  - 2.6% Administration
  - 2.4% Attendance & Health

*VDOE
Challenges in Urban School Districts

Student Membership

- Long range projections - declining enrollment
- Disproportionate growth/decline
- High Discipline & Drop Out Rates
- Graduation Rate
- More than 70% RPS schools – 50% students below the poverty line in 2007
- Insufficient Parental Involvement
Challenges in Urban School Districts

- Change in Local Governance
- School Board Continuity
- Funding
  - 3 years of multi-million cuts
  - Flat funding of local share
  - State Tax Revenue Forecast
Beyond Competence
Continuation of Journey

“It’s about how you take a good organization and turn it into one that produces sustained great results.”

Jim Collins, Good to Great
Ongoing RPS Reform Agenda

- School Board ~ Focus on “Whole Child”
  - Broaden concept of Academic Achievement
  - Incorporate “Wellness” into daily learning
  - Foster ethical behavior
  - Rethinking Curriculum, Choice, Design
Generalizations

- “It is hard to believe what you have never experienced!”
- “People must see, hear and experience high performing urban schools.”
- “People will have to want the change enough to work hard for it.”
Generalizations

- Teams must understand the critical variables that influence change.
- Equity vs. Excellence – Cannot be a “zero sum” game.
- “. . . never lose faith in the end of the story.”

Admiral James Stockdale