



Creating schools in St. Croix that provide a
World-Class Education for all students.

EDUCATIONAL PLAN 2011 – 2014

Striving Towards
Excellence
Teamwork
And A Renewed Focus
On Raising Student Achievement

St. Croix School District Administrators' Institute



Letter from the Superintendent

Dear Parents, Students, Faculty & Staff:

By now many of you have heard about the district's Strategic Plan: ***"Creating Schools in St. Croix that Provide a World-Class Education for All Students."*** This plan was developed based on input from the administrators, teachers and support staff in the district who participated in strategic planning starting in March 2011. The plan clearly sets forth seven (7) work plans that are aggressive, bold, critical and completely within our reach, if we extend ourselves to our full potential. By doing so, we recognize the promise of our students and fully develop their potential to lead extraordinary, honorable, productive and personally rewarding lives, beginning with the 2011-2012 school year.

This plan will provide the district with the guidance and the direction necessary to ensure that all district stakeholders have a clear understanding of what we expect to achieve and how we expect to achieve it. It also helps us assess the effectiveness of our action plans, programs, and resource allocations to see what we should continue, discontinue, or modify. We will implement the strategies outlined in this document with consistency and clarity across all of our schools, providing extra support for students, teachers and staff in our most challenged schools.

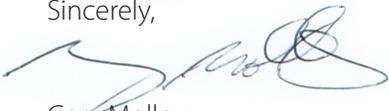
We are committed to success and intend to make clear and measurable progress toward our objectives every year. However, this is a long-term strategy and we expect that it will take several years to completely achieve all of our goals. In the meantime, we will continue to make improvements that will have immediate, measurable and significant positive impacts on the quality of public education in the St. Croix District.

The seven (7) work plans outlined in this plan are extremely aggressive and are intended to meet local, state and federal requirements. As a School District, we are committed to holding ourselves accountable as we focus on implementing our action plans with fidelity. I know that this will not be easy and we will have to make adjustments along the way, but our focus will remain on the work plans and we are confident that we will reach our goals.

As Insular Superintendent of Schools, I look forward to working with each and every one of you to continue the positive trajectory of our school district. Together, through the collaboration of faculty, staff, administrators, our Board of Education, and the entire St. Croix community, we can succeed in delivering a "world-class" education to each of our students.

Please join us as we continue our journey of teaching, learning and achieving in the St. Croix Public Schools.

Sincerely,



Gary Molloy
Insular Superintendent
The School District of St. Croix

Selecting a Strategic Partner

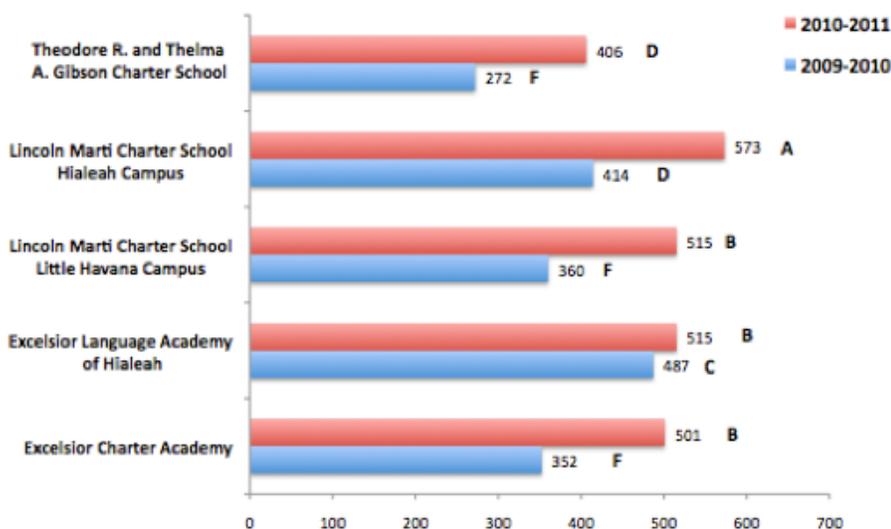
According to the Mass Insight Education & Research Institute Turnaround Challenge, “fragmented, episodic assistance from outside partners must be replaced by a new paradigm of aligned, integrated support” (Mass Insight)¹. In order to accelerate and streamline the school improvement process in the School District of St. Croix, several potential strategic partners were analyzed to determine the best fit for where we were as a school system and to obtain the most significant possible outcome for our students. After our leadership team reviewed the potential candidates, it was apparent that if we were going to be bold and innovative about this transformational work, National Academic Educational Partners, Inc. had the track record in urban schools that St. Croix needed to transform educational programs for students.

National Academic Educational Partners, Inc. (NAEP) has been a long time partner of the School District of St. Croix and has successfully led several seminars and institutes for our teachers and administrators, including:

- Leadership Institute for the 2010-2011 School Year (August 16 – August 18, 2010)
- Strategic Planning Challenge Identification Sessions (April 27th – April 29th, 2011)
- Strategic Work Plan Development Seminars (May 13 – May 20, 2011)
- Data-Driven Instruction Professional Development Seminar (June 21, 2011)
- Standard-Based Curriculum and Instruction Professional Development Seminar (June 22, 2011)
- Teacher Effectiveness Professional Development Seminar (June 23, 2011)
- Leadership Professional Development Seminar (June 24, 2011)
- Teacher Effectiveness Professional Development Seminar (August 24, 25, 26, 29 & 30, 2011)

Furthermore, NAEP has successfully and consistently turned around low-performing schools with large minority populations with similar data as the School District of St. Croix. The following graphs demonstrate proven examples of NAEP’s success in low-performing schools as evidenced by a variety of measures. More examples may be found at their website at www.academiceducationalpartners.org.

NAEP South Florida Partner School Accountability Scores Improvements





**MILWAUKEE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Office of Leadership Support and Accountability
5225 W. Vliet Street
P.O. Box 2181
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201-2181
Phone: (414) 475-8016
Fax: (414) 475-8470

April 27, 2011

To whom it may concern,

As the Regional Executive Specialist with the Milwaukee Public School System, I have had the privilege of working with National Academic Educational Partners for approximately 10 months as they have served as turnaround partners in two of the high schools in which I support.

The true test of an effective partnership is in student achievement. As I review the achievement indicators for the schools in which I support, the two schools supported by NAEP, demonstrate high levels of improvement as measured by state assessments. One school in particular had a 10.3% increase in the Math assessment over last years performance and had the highest proficiency gain in the region. The second school supported by NAEP recorded the second highest regional gain in math. This work was accomplished in spite of a number of barriers and hurdles that had to be navigated.

NAEP has researched, reviewed and made recommendations in areas such as student schedules, the operational school day, reading supports, issues surrounding suspensions, classroom tardy concerns, teacher attendance, recognitions and rewards, and leadership roles and responsibilities.

I highly recommend serious consideration in engaging the supports, expertise, and dedication to student learning that NAEP brings.

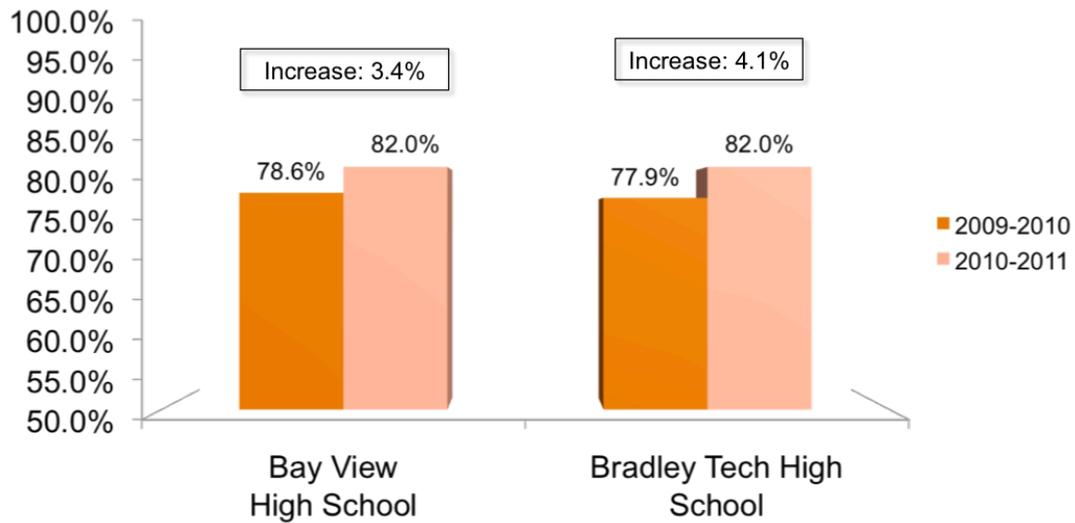
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dennis G. Queen', written over a horizontal line.

Dennis G. Queen
Regional Executive Specialist
Milwaukee Public Schools

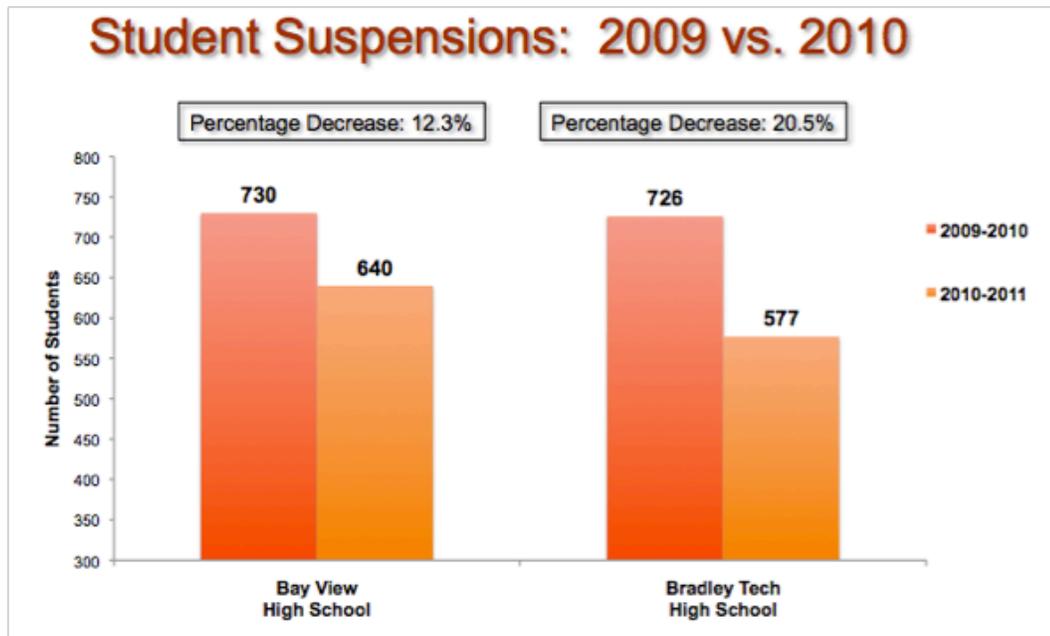
WKCE Exam “Proficient”

Subtest	Bay View High School	Bradley Tech High School
Language Arts	+5%	-5%
Math	+8%	+8%
Science	+6%	+6%
Social Studies	+18%	+7%

Student Attendance: 2009 vs. 2010



Student Suspensions: 2009 vs. 2010



Letter from the Chief Executive Officer of National Academic Educational Partners, Inc.

It continues to be our honor to serve the students, staff, families and other stakeholders of the School District of St. Croix. It is always a beautiful vision to see a community coming together for the betterment of its greatest resource: its students. Every school and district, large or small, has a range of opportunities, barriers and problems such as those delineated in the Strategic Planning Sessions collaboratively conducted by National Academic Educational Partners, Inc. and the School District of St. Croix. I have found that when community stakeholders are focused on open, clear communication and are willing to accept the realities of what lies ahead, such as the case in the School District of St. Croix, much is possible. In our efforts to present the clearest picture and recommendations, please remember that the goal is to facilitate academic improvement and provide the greatest opportunity for success throughout the start and continuation of the upcoming school year. With the privilege and benefit of having been part of the initial organization of the Educational Plan and staff leadership training, we feel that this plan will result in the culmination and enhancement of our earlier planning sessions and professional development workshops.

This Educational Plan will address the need for documented systems that will allow for the establishment of long- and short-term goals and deliverables in the new school year and several subsequent years. The challenges and gaps assessed by the District Leadership Team have prevented administration and staff from reaching their full effectiveness and students from being offered the necessary rigor, relevance and rapport to reach the world-class education the community strives to offer.

Additionally, the start of the school year provides a unique opportunity to “reach for change” in schools and classrooms in the 2011-2012 school year. I have found that the effectiveness of a district and its schools is heavily influenced by the ability of its leaders to spread and teach what they themselves are learning – in essence becoming “Learning Leaders”.

In closing, I would like to thank all of those who have assisted in the formulation of the Strategic Plan as it is never an easy undertaking to look around and objectively assess reality. It is important that in this process, we maintain the momentum of reform in the School District of St. Croix and continue to establish, implement and monitor the initiatives that will provide our students with a World Class Education!

Sincerely,

Jeffery Hernandez

Jeffrey Hernandez
Chief Executive Officer
National Academic Educational Partners, Inc.



The Strategic Planning Process



Gap and Challenge Identification (April 27, 2011 – April 28, 2011)

In order to develop an Educational Plan that targets specific and urgent district improvement components, the Leadership Team of the School District of St. Croix, in collaboration with our strategic partner National Academic Educational Partners, Inc., collaborated to execute the following steps to delineate gaps and challenges. This effort commenced with a comprehensive survey that was posed to the Leadership Team and was discussed in an open forum that included, but was not limited to, the following:

- Identified strengths and areas for improvement in the School District of St. Croix and challenges impeding bold and innovative change within the schools. Examples include:
 - Area for Improvement: There is no official or unofficial leadership mentoring structure
 - Area for Improvement: Creation of the Pacing Guide needs to be supported with implementation training and monitoring
- Aligned District challenges with Virgin Islands Department of Education Educational System Improvement Process (eSIP) Priorities:
 - Academic Achievement
 - Improved School Culture
 - Improved Teacher/Instructional Leader Effectiveness

Division of Challenges by Category (April 29, 2011)

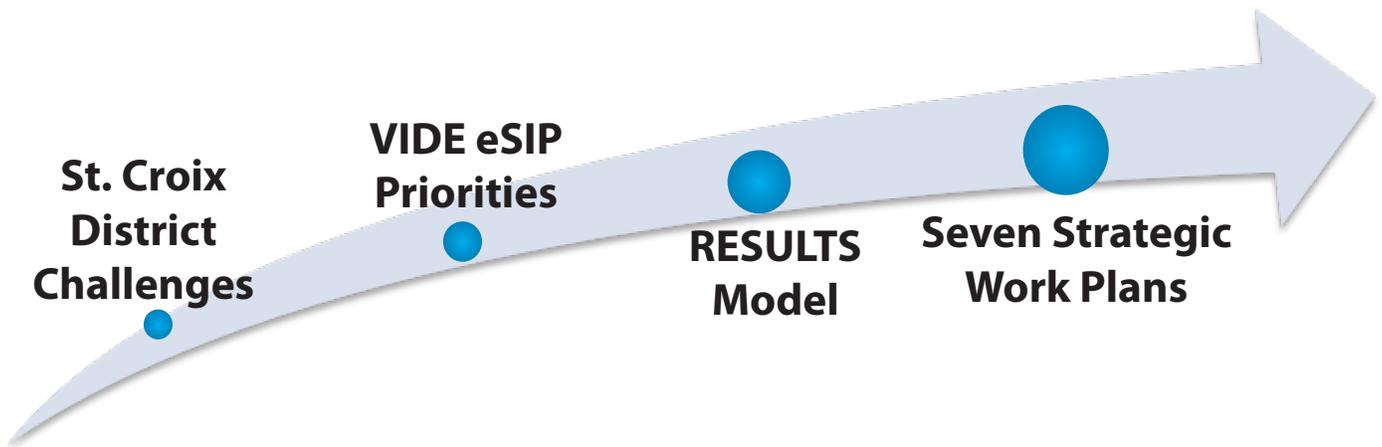
Upon reflection and discussion of the challenges with the Extended District Leadership Team, National Academic Educational Partners, Inc. proposed a grouping of challenges to focus efforts into seven components that are aligned with the Global Educational Transformational System: RESULTS model used by NAEP, a proven methodology for school and district transformation founded on the seven most important components of an effective school that truly provides a quality education for all students. This session included, but was not limited to, the following:

- All challenges were listed, described, and discussed
- Similarities and parallels were analyzed
- Challenges were grouped in alignment with the RESULTS model to be organized and addressed in this Educational Work Plan. Challenge groupings included:
 - Leadership Effectiveness
 - Teacher Effectiveness

Work Plan Development (May 13, 2011)

The development of each work plan necessitated a collaboration that would integrate the familiarity with district challenges possessed by district leaders and the transformation expertise of a proven external partner. As a result, National Academic Educational Partners, Inc. facilitated discussions and ideas brought forth during the Educational Work Plan Development session, which included the following:

- Teams were created based on the Seven Strategic Work Plans that were derived based on the challenge groupings from the work session that took place on April 29, 2011. Examples of the Seven Strategic Work Plans included:
 - Leadership Effectiveness
 - Teacher Effectiveness
- Each team collaborated to develop strategies and initiatives specific to their assigned work plan.



As delineated above, the Seven Educational Work Plans developed were a result of the integration of challenges described by the District Leadership Committee and the Virgin Island Department of Education Educational System Improvement Process (eSIP) Priorities.

In order to ensure that the strategic plans for the School District of St. Croix are both comprehensive and research-based, the District Leadership Team, in collaboration with National Academic Educational Partners, Inc., has aligned the work plans to the following RESULTS model. This model for school reform captures the essential seven components of school operations as observed by practitioners at all levels of educational reform including teachers, administrators, and district and state leaders.



The Seven Strategic Work Plans

Work Plan #1:

Provide a venue for real-time data to be available for administrators, teachers and parents in order to guide informed decision-making with credible, relevant, and customizable data points.

Work Plan #2:

Create Extended Learning Opportunities for students so that they may benefit from intervention, enrichment, and acceleration and be well-prepared for entry into a modern, competitive global workforce.

Work Plan #3:

To ensure effective teaching and learning, implement a standards-based curriculum & assessment program to ensure that what is written and scheduled to be taught, is taught and assessed.

Work Plan #4:

Create a unified culture of excellence at the district, school, classroom, and community levels.

Work Plan #5:

Build the capacity of the district and school leaders to become “agents of change” in order to provide a world-class education for all students.

Work Plan #6:

Become smarter about who teaches our students and strategic on how their effectiveness is developed.

Work Plan #7:

Transform students into independent and engaged learners where every child becomes his or her own classroom.

Work Plan 1: Data-Driven Instruction

Work Plan #1:

Provide a venue for real-time data to be available for administrators, teachers and parents in order to guide informed decision-making with credible, relevant, and customizable data points.

When used in a targeted and diagnostic manner, data is the most essential tool educators have to provide significant useful information for: the placement and clustering of students; assessing the efficacy of specific teaching methodologies and programs; and measuring the instructional effectiveness of schools, programs, and teachers. A profound analysis, such as segmenting students by demographic and income groups or by content clusters or strands, will facilitate informed decision-making with regards to student placement and instructional practices.

There is a need to improve how schools and districts effectively use data to guide classroom practice with a goal of improving student's proficiency levels on standardized tests as well as teacher-developed assessments. Educators must effectively utilize all available data to intervene and enrich instructional and academic programs for students. It is also critical for districts to have a platform that allows for all stakeholders involved in the decision-making process of a student's academic program to have quick and user-friendly access to it at any given time.

Although many districts use multiple data sources to more accurately account for and gauge their progress, student achievement as measured through statewide assessments is becoming synonymous with accountability. Assessment data are the primary source of information under NCLB, and assessments have become the primary tool for gauging students' success as well as the success of teachers, schools, and districts. It is necessary to ensure assessments are of high quality due to their central role in accountability systems.

Measuring student achievement and school progress toward goals in multiple ways is important; equally critical is strategically using these data to diagnose problems and work toward solutions. Research has found that principals do want to use data to provide instructional leadership in a more informed way (Torrence, 2002). A study by Fuhrman (1999) supporting the importance of data usage found that many schools labeled as "inadequate" did not use test results diagnostically.

Data-Driven Instruction: Needs Assessment

To better understand how well data is utilized in the School District of St. Croix, participants in several strategic sessions discussed various components of data use, including sources of data, how often it is analyzed, and the way in which it is shared. The following gaps and challenges represent great opportunities for improvement at both the school and district levels.

1. **Does our District have a well-defined plan in place for supporting the ongoing need for data collection and analysis to support and drive instructional needs for continuous improvement?**
 - The School District of St. Croix does not currently have a comprehensive and cohesive plan to collect and analyze data. The School District of St. Croix currently has multiple data sources that are acquired through a variety of formative and summative assessments. In some cases, data collection is being replicated because the tools used to gather this data are assessing the same area of the learning process at the same time. While state standards may delineate the eventual destination that our students reach every year upon promotion of a grade level, it is their current academic progress, as indicated by formative and summative assessment data and teacher observations, that must drive how these students are instructed. If the status quo persists and different assessments are used to determine the same or similar student competencies, the use of data will not be as optimal as necessary to differentiate and advance education in the School District of St. Croix.

2. Does our District use data to drive decisions and target resources and ongoing support to our schools and instructors?

- Currently, each school's budget is based on the number of students in the school as opposed to the more effective school improvement method of differentiating budget allocations based on data and performance. That then drives staffing and resource decisions, which leads to the less than optimal situation of a low-performing school and a high-performing school with the same staffing allocation and composition. Furthermore, the instructional materials and course offerings of the schools are not customized based on the student body's learning needs, both overall and within individual demographics. In addition, both teacher retention and replacement and teacher professional development are currently not based on classroom data. In other words, School A and School B are budgeted on the same formula, are staffed using the same ratios, and receive the same curriculum materials.

Note: Recommended Activities for school support such as curriculum materials and professional development that also need to be driven by data will be outlined in Work Plans 3, 5, and 6.

3. Do school administrators and teachers use data to drive teaching and learning in our classrooms?

- In the School District of St. Croix, different levels of data are used to drive teaching and learning and are based on sporadic decision-making as opposed to a unified, consistent data use effort. If data is gathered but not utilized as the central driver behind instructional intervention and enrichment, then instructors and administrators are gathering data for the sake of gathering data. The instructors of St. Croix can no longer base instruction on the scope and sequence and chapters in a textbook. Furthermore, the adults in a school must reflect on the needs of the student, not the other way around. Instructors need technical support in order to quickly and efficiently access, analyze, and segment student data. Currently, the lack of a centralized database of student data, coupled with the need for more advanced IT resources and teacher virtual access to student data presents a major obstacle for effective data analysis by our teachers.

4. Does our District have a clear communication plan focusing around sharing and communicating data and student information vertically and horizontally to all stakeholders?

- While the School District of St. Croix has various communication protocols in place for sharing data, they are not yet unified or consistent. Whether vertically or horizontally, across grade levels or among grade levels, instructors and administrators must work closer together to share and understand student data. The current disconnect that takes place among teachers, among administrators, and in general prevents the flow of student information necessary to allow for the consistency, structure, and alignment of district efforts to advance and differentiate student instruction. This is a major cause of the aforementioned overlap in assessments that test for the same student competencies.

WORK PLAN #1: INITIATIVES

Initiative 1.1: Develop a Clear and Consistent Data Collection and Analysis Process

Establish data collection and assessment protocols at both the school and district levels to improve student achievement. (Needs Assessment Component 1)

Recommended Activities

1. The School District of St. Croix will gather all state assessment data in a user-friendly format to analyze trends across schools within elementary, middle, and high school levels in the district, across grade levels in the district, and across classrooms in the district.
2. The School District of St. Croix will disaggregate the state assessment data by the subgroups defined in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.
3. The School District of St. Croix will set measurable targets for instructional practices to be monitored and determine the specific assessments and/or tools that will be used to measure whether the goals have been achieved.
4. The School District of St. Croix will select one universal screener for reading and math for each grade configuration level (i.e. elementary, middle, and high) in alignment to the District's Response to Intervention Plan and State Accountability expectations.
5. The School District of St. Croix will develop and implement a plan for the administration of the selected universal screener.
6. The School District of St. Croix will conduct a thorough analysis of the universal screener results to identify strengths and weaknesses across school configuration levels district-wide, schools district-wide, grade levels district-wide, classrooms school-wide, and individual students both school- and district-wide. This data will be used to determine enrichments and interventions for students.
7. The School District of St. Croix will establish and communicate guidelines for the composition and role of district and school-based data assessment teams. These guidelines should include clear instructions for the selection of each individual that will comprise the data assessment team. In addition, the Superintendent should appoint an individual that is responsible for coordinating and facilitating the efforts of the data assessment teams.
8. The School District of St. Croix will establish district-based and school-based data assessment teams adhering to the guidelines mentioned above.
9. The School District of St. Croix will implement a data action timeline for the entire school year in order to guide and communicate the data assessment team's assessment and data processing practices from hurried usage to deliberate application that pioneers instructional decisions (i.e. schedule grade level meetings to discuss the state assessment analysis of the data due by September 10th).
10. The School District of St. Croix will release a Request for Proposal (RFP) to identify a partner with extensive experience in training data assessment teams to deliver comprehensive professional development to the data assessment teams to ensure they are equipped with the latest research-based strategies to effectively guide data use to impact teaching and learning.
11. The identified partner will assess the members of the data teams and their various strengths and opportunities for improvement to create a professional development plan and corresponding calendar that will build the data assessments teams' capacity to fulfill their roles and responsibilities. This calendar will guide the completion of all

professional development events by July of 2012 with ongoing support scheduled throughout the implementation of the Educational Plan.

12. The School District of St. Croix will release an RFP to select formative assessments for reading, math, and science that will be used consistently across subjects and grade levels within the district.
13. The School District of St. Croix will develop an assessment calendar that will guide the administration of the formative assessments throughout the entire school year. This should also be noted in the scope and sequences for each subject area used by the District across the grade levels.
14. The formative assessment vendor should provide the district with a training plan with event dates that are aligned with the projected assessment calendar to ensure that all stakeholders are equipped with the skill set necessary to successfully administer the assessments and analyze the resulting data. This professional development should be administered on an as-needed basis every year thereafter for reasons such as advancing user knowledge of the assessments, new teacher hiring, or improvements or updates to the assessments that become available from the vendor.
15. The vendor should train the students on how to access and analyze their own academic data so that they may become key stakeholders in driving their own academic progress. This component should be part of the vendor RFP released by December of the previous year.
16. The vendor should provide the district with a parent professional development session on how to access the data so each parent may help drive their child's academic progress via better informed decision-making (i.e. enrolling their child in Extended Learning Opportunity programming if necessary).

Note: It is recommended that Information Technology staff work collaboratively with the stakeholders involved with this initiative to determine whether bandwidth of the IT infrastructure can support the implementation of this initiative. In addition, Senior Leadership should work collaboratively with IT staff to ensure appropriate technical support, both from the vendor and from the district, is built into the implementation plan

Initiative 1.2: District Use of Data to Drive Decisions Around School Support

Establish district protocols for determining school budgets using General Fund human resources and Federal dollars (i.e. Title V).

Recommended Activities

1. The Superintendent should meet with the State to determine what flexibility the District has regarding using data performance to drive budgetary and staffing decisions at the district and school level.
2. The School District of St. Croix should create a school resource allocation committee to review the current method for creating school budgets using General Fund Federal dollars (i.e. Title I). This committee should include representation of all necessary school and district stakeholders.
3. The School District of St. Croix should disseminate clear expectations of deliverables and timelines (via a project management calendar) for the school resources allocation committee that includes a primary focus on the use of data to drive budgetary allocations for each school (i.e. allocation of reading teachers based on the amount of non-proficient students in reading).
4. The Resource Allocation Committee should present a proposed budgetary allocation to the Superintendent that is founded on tiering school budgets based on school performance data on NCLB accountability areas.
5. The data-driven school resource allocation plan should be communicated to all stakeholders within the district.
6. The school budgets will be created adhering to the new data-driven resource allocation guidelines.

Note: Recommended Activities for school support such as curriculum materials and professional development that also need to be driven by data will be outlined in Work Plans 3, 5, and 6.

Initiative 1.3: Data Communication Plan

District creates a clear communication plan focusing around sharing and communicating data and student information vertically and horizontally to all stakeholders.

1. The School District of St. Croix will release an RFP for a vendor to develop and implement a data analysis platform that has the capability to collect and organize all sources of school and district data in a user-friendly format. This vendor should also have proven qualifications in providing training as to the use of the platform.
2. The School District of St. Croix will select the vendor that is best able to develop and implement the above-mentioned data collection and analysis platform.
3. The Data Assessment Team will work with the data platform vendor to create guidelines for the data platform including, but not limited to, the hierarchy of user access, frequency of user access, and user functionality.
4. The vendor will work with the Data Assessment Team to analyze all current sources of data to create a plan to integrate all available school and district data (from various sources) into a single, user-friendly and interactive platform accessible to all necessary stakeholders.
5. The School District of St. Croix will create a training plan with specific timelines and deliverables that will guide professional development for stakeholders with regards to using the data analysis platform. This professional development should be administered on an as-needed basis every year thereafter for reasons such as advancing user knowledge of the platform, new teacher hiring or improvements or updates to the platform that become available from the vendor.
6. The School District of St. Croix will create a publicity campaign to notify and prepare all necessary district and school stakeholders for the implementation and use of the aforementioned data analysis platform.
7. A data chats calendar should be developed for all district stakeholders to direct when data chats should take place at each level, such as Superintendent data chats with school administrators, principal data chats with classroom instructors, and classroom instructor data chats with students and parents. Please note that this should include all relevant assessment periods such as formative assessments and universal screeners.
8. District senior leadership (i.e. Superintendent and Deputy Superintendents) should set protocol for data chats with school-based administrators. These data chats should take place in October of 2011 and according to the data chat calendar every year thereafter.
9. District senior leadership (i.e. Superintendent and Deputy Superintendents) and a sampling of school administrators should set protocol for data chats to take place with instructors. These data chats should take place in November of 2011 and according to the data chat calendar every year thereafter.
10. District senior leadership (i.e. Superintendent and Deputy Superintendents), a sampling of school administrators, and a sampling of school teachers, should set protocol for data chats to take place with students. These data chats should take place every year thereafter.
11. District senior leadership (i.e. Superintendent and Deputy Superintendents), a sampling of school administrators, a sampling of school teachers, and a sampling of parents, should set protocol for data chats to take place with parents/community. These data chats should take place every year thereafter.

Note: It is recommended that Information Technology staff work collaboratively with the stakeholders involved with this initiative to determine whether bandwidth of the IT infrastructure can support the implementation of this initiative. In addition, Senior Leadership should work collaboratively with IT staff to ensure appropriate technical support, both from the vendor and from the district, is built into the implementation plan.

Work Plan 2: Extended Learning Opportunity

Extended Learning Opportunity: Work Plan Definition

Create opportunities for students to have access to Extended Learning Opportunities to provide intervention, enrichment, and acceleration in order to prepare them for entry into a modern, competitive global workforce.

Extended Learning Opportunity: Background Information and Research

Both research and practice show that students with severe achievement gaps are a result of not only the instruction they receive in school, but also the environment and culture that surrounds them outside of school. An increasing number of children are entering kindergarten less prepared than their peers. As a result, they are starting at a disadvantage both at home and in school, leading to a culture of failure and lack of support throughout their scholastic years.

This disenfranchised group of students needs additional support to be successful academically. For these children, what happens before and after school can be as critical as what happens during regular school hours. According to the National Education Association, "When school-age children and teens do not have access to such programs and are left unsupervised after school, they are more likely to receive poor grades, drop out of school, and engage in high risk behaviors than children who participate in constructive activities supervised by responsible adults" (The Regional Education Laboratory, 2004)ⁱⁱ.

The goal of the Extended Learning Opportunity provided by The School District of St. Croix should be to facilitate academic achievement beyond the classroom through before and after school programming that:

1. Supplements students' academic performance
2. Engages students in the community
3. Develops leadership skills and healthy attitudes for learning
4. Prevents students from engaging in risky behaviors
5. Provides academic intervention and extracurricular activities that stimulate students' minds

A study published by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning found that regular participation in programs that provide academic and social activities contribute positively to children's academic and social development. "A meta-analysis of afterschool programs that focused on personal and social development found that the programs did, in fact, have a positive impact on students' grades, academic achievement, and self esteem."

However, successful programs that increase academic achievement, especially for children in low socio-economic households, must be strategic and targeted in nature, as opposed to a simple extension of the regular school day. While schools and school districts requiring turnaround services all share similar challenges, these challenges are by no means identical. As a result, Extended Learning Opportunity programs must be targeted to alleviate specific challenges.

The following programs are excellent examples of successful supplementary programming:

6. "Participants in L.A.'s BEST, a citywide elementary after-school program in Los Angeles, showed improved school day attendance and higher aspirations for high school and college education. The dropout rates among L.A.'s BEST students is 20 percent lower than the overall district dropout rate." (Huang, 2005)
7. "Families and partner schools connected with Tenacity, a program offering 3,000 Boston students tennis instruction and academic enrichment during the summer and after school, report high satisfaction with the program and increased academic skills development in students." (Expanding Learning Opportunities, #29) .

Extended Learning Opportunity: Needs Assessment & Challenge Areas

The School District of St. Croix has established several initiatives to facilitate academic success through structured before and after school programming. Initiatives such as the “CHOICES” Extended Learning Program and various after school tutoring programs have helped children engage in activities that build character and entrench and enrich academic progress.

To further build upon this momentum, the leadership team of the St. Croix School District must address the following gaps and challenges in the quest to provide more targeted and cost-effective Extended Learning Opportunity Programming:

1. Which accountability standards have been established for ELO programming? How are school-based and provider-based ELO programs measured for effectiveness?

- The School District of St. Croix must make significant strides to move ELO programming to a more consistent and effective level of implementation. In order to successfully implement Extended Learning Opportunity, the administrators, instructors, and other district leaders must first come together to define the measurable outcomes that must take place to serve as indicators that the ELO provided is indeed successful. Measurable targets and effective, clear monitoring systems need to be established in order to track student improvement and progress in both the ELO programming itself and during regularly scheduled classes.

2. Do current ELO resources align to student needs and appropriately supplement the classroom curriculum?

- Although progress has been made in the past couple of years, ELO resources and programming do not yet have the optimal alignment to student needs. Currently, there is no systematic method by which children enrolled in ELO are assigned specific ELO classes. Teachers and administrators must come together to put forth a strategic effort towards understanding student strengths and weaknesses and developing each student’s ELO assignment accordingly. This is especially true for intervention programs targeting student improvement in math and reading. A basic ELO program will have intervention for struggling students and enrichment for students that are excelling. To further maximize the effectiveness of ELO programming, it must be planned and implemented in a way that not only aligns to student needs, but also supplements and complements the instruction delivered in the classroom. Lessons, activities, and exercises delivered during ELO must serve specific, strategic goals such as remediation of concepts from previous grades or extra practice with concepts currently being studied that are different from classroom instruction. Currently, this link between the classroom and ELO is a major area of opportunity.

3. How does STX select and monitor ELO providers?

- To ensure that the District receives the highest Return on Investment possible for its Extended Learning Opportunity programming, it will be necessary to seek out a vendor(s) that is both specialized and proven in providing the type of extended learning school services necessary to help the students of St. Croix. While on-island teachers may provide tutoring and content area lessons, the experience and extended capability of a highly-qualified vendor will ensure that children are receiving the best after school intervention, enrichment, and tutoring available today. Further hindering the effective use of resources is the delay in compensation for teachers that participate in ELO programming. This staffing dilemma necessitates creative solutions to ensure that staffing issues do not become an obstacle to advancing the education of St. Croix’s students.

WORK PLAN #2: INITIATIVES

Initiative 2.1: Develop Accountability Standards for District Extended Learning Opportunity (ELO)

Implement a system of standards that will be used to determine the effectiveness of ELO and, in result, change and adjust ELO programming accordingly.

Recommended Activities

1. The School District of St. Croix will compile a complete list of all ELO activities that have been implemented within the district for the past school year to include, but not be limited to, the corresponding curriculum materials used for each program.
2. The School District of St. Croix will compile a list of all students that have participated in the aforementioned ELO activities and analyze the success of those students according to data points derived from available formative and summative assessment data.
3. The School District of St. Croix will utilize all available analyzed data above to determine the effectiveness of each ELO program and its corresponding curriculum materials, based on the student participants. If possible, ELO student participants of a specific user profile (i.e. non-proficient) should be compared with non-ELO student participants, the latter being the control group.
4. The School District of St. Croix, using the data collected, will select the successful ELO programs to be continued based on their success and eliminate non-effective ELO programs from being used in the upcoming year.
5. The School District of St. Croix will leverage the effective characteristics of the selected successful ELO programs to determine district benchmarks and accountability standards for what optimal ELO programs should look like.
6. The School District of St. Croix will identify which academic needs are not addressed by the selected ELO programs and utilize the benchmarks and optimal ELO program model to identify additional ELO services that would fulfill these gaps. This can be done through internal or external providers.
7. The School District of St. Croix will utilize the benchmarks and optimal ELO program model to establish and disseminate an approval process that school administrators can use to implement ELO programs in their schools and select the materials to be used within the programs. This approval process will streamline the inconsistencies of the current ELO programs from school to school and will ensure adherence to the benchmarks developed.
8. The School District of St. Croix will utilize the benchmarks and optimal ELO program model to develop a Fidelity of Implementation monitoring plan (FOI) that expresses clear and consistent guidelines as to what is expected in an ELO program. FOI plans will be inspected by District Senior Leadership. In addition, the plan should include, but not be limited to, prescriptive actions on how to address any gaps in the implementation process, as well as specific, measurable targets for student academic improvement as a result of the ELO.

Initiative 2.2: School-Based Extended Learning Opportunity

Establish principal-led Extended Learning Opportunity at each school that is aligned to the standards Initiative.

Recommended Activities

1. The principal and the school leadership team should utilize data from the previous year's formative and summative assessments, as well as the current year's universal screener data, to determine the most critical needs of the school's student body.
2. The School District of St. Croix will develop a list of students to participate in ELO programming, prioritizing students that are not enrolled in Supplemental Educational Services, and students that are classified as "non-proficient".

3. The School District of St. Croix will analyze the school budget to determine available funding that can be used to institute ELO programs. Based on the budget allocations and the standards from Initiative 2.1, determine the quantity of teachers that can be hired and, as a result, the quantity of students eligible to participate in ELO.
4. The principal and the school leadership team should utilize the standards and benchmarks determined in Initiative 2.1 to establish the school's all-inclusive ELO programming to include, but not be limited to, before school, after school, and Saturday sessions. Please note that it is important to keep the budget in mind during this activity.
5. The School District of St. Croix will review and evaluate the core curriculum's scope and sequence, to determine the instructional focus calendar that will be utilized in the ELO programming to address the gaps identified during the ongoing data collection process (i.e. In week A, Author's Purpose is taught during core classes and in Week B, Author's Purpose is taught in ELO programming).
6. The School District of St. Croix will send communication home to inform parents of the academic gaps in their child's student profile and, as a result, in which ELO program they must enroll their child. Registration information should be included as part of this communication.
7. The School District of St. Croix will utilize the confirmed ELO student population based on the registration process to determine actual staffing requirements for ELO programming. Advertise for ELO personnel positions and hire those teachers that apply that have demonstrated significant instructional effectiveness based on classroom data and administrative evaluations.
8. The School District of St. Croix will train the selected ELO personnel on the benchmarks and accountability standards created in Initiative 2.1 to ensure consistent and effective ELO programming across the district.
9. The principal and the school leadership team should meet with the school's ELO personnel to express expectations and set measurable targets for the school year's ELO programming.
10. The School District of St. Croix will initiate the school-based ELO programming.
11. The School District of St. Croix will monitor the effectiveness of the ELO programs using the FOI plan and the accountability standards from Initiative 2.1. Additionally, use ongoing formative and summative assessment data to monitor academic progress of participating students.

Initiative 2.3: Supplemental Educational Services (SES)

Select and manage an SES provider that will address student challenges different from those challenges addressed by regular classroom instruction or school-based ELO programming.

Recommended Activities

1. A meeting should take place between District Senior Leadership and the VIDE to determine the flexibility STX will have to initiate a competitive bidding process to select an SES provider for the 2012-2013 school year, whose instructional methodology is aligned to the district's vision.
2. If the School District of St. Croix has flexibility in the SES provider that it chooses, the district should develop and release an RFP for SES providers with experience with minority populations, low-performing schools, and a proven track record of successful SES provision. If the district does not have flexibility to select their own, District Senior Leadership should meet with the SES provider selected by the VIDE to develop an action plan that is inclusive of the district's mission (i.e. measurable targets, dates, and standards for ELO programming established in Initiative 2.1).
3. If the School District of St. Croix has flexibility in the SES provider that it chooses, select the SES provider that is best able to meet the ELO programming needs that cannot be addressed by school-based ELO programs. The SES provider must also be qualified to meet the accountability standards established in Initiative 2.1.

4. SES services should start, regardless of how the SES provider is selected (either state or district).
5. The School District of St. Croix will utilize the FOI and standards established in Initiative 2.1 to monitor the effectiveness of the SES programming. A calendar of meetings should be established with the SES provider to allow the district to provide feedback on the effectiveness of their programming.

Note: Every year thereafter, the cycle of SES ELO programming planning and implementation may differ based on whether the state or district selects the SES provider.

Initiative 2.4: Community-Based Extended Learning Opportunity

Establish as many quality relationships as possible with community agencies and organizations that can facilitate or provide resources for Extended Learning Opportunity programming.

1. The School District of St. Croix will identify all viable external community stakeholders in close proximity to each school that align to the standards established in Initiative 2.1 and that may serve as key partners with the school and/or school district to provide venues to facilitate student access to ELO programs. This listing should be disseminated to parents.
2. The School District of St. Croix will schedule a call to action meeting between the leaders of each community agency and the schools and/or the district to discuss specific student needs and challenges that may be addressed by these agencies' ELO programming.
3. The School District of St. Croix will develop an action plan in collaboration with each community ELO partner that is inclusive of measurable targets, dates, and standards for that partner's ELO programming. The standards should be aligned to those established in Initiative 2.1.
4. Throughout the span of these services the School District of St. Croix will utilize the FOI and standards established in Initiative 2.1 to monitor the effectiveness of the community-based ELO programming.

NOTE: The curriculum materials to be utilized during ELO programming, regardless of the agent providing the services, will be delineated as part of Work Plan #3, Standards-Based Curriculum and Assessment.

Work Plan 3: Standards-Based Curriculum & Assessment

Work Plan #3:

Implement a standards-based curriculum and assessment program to ensure that what is written and scheduled to be taught, is actually taught, and then assessed to ensure the effectiveness of teaching and learning in the School District of St. Croix.

A well-designed curriculum seamlessly links and aligns teaching, learning, and related assessment components so that teachers and administrators can focus on teaching and successfully meeting the needs of all students. Work Plan 3 is designed to increase student achievement in a learning environment in which standards, curriculum, instructional resources, continual assessment, and staff development are aligned to incorporate current educational research and best practices.

Data should be used to drive a number of activities and decisions undertaken at the school and district level such as screening students for placement, using progress monitoring or formative assessments to determine curricular changes, and interpreting annual performance data to identify areas of weakness for future educational focus.

The goal of Enrichment and Intervention Programming is to facilitate academic achievement beyond the normal curriculum through supplemental programming. This programming targets specific areas of a student's academic performance and prevents students from further academic delay. It is critical to note that diagnosing the timing and location for this additional programming is as important as the programming itself.

Standards-Based Curriculum and Assessment: Needs Assessment

Needs Assessment Introduction

1. **Is there current Pacing Guide Effective? Does every subject have a Pacing Guide? (pacing guide and instructional materials)**
 - The School District of St. Croix faces a dual challenge to improve and more strategically deliver a focused curriculum to its students. The more pending of these challenges is the necessary effort to guide teachers as they deliver the current district-approved curriculum. While the district has made great progress in establishing consistent and effective Pacing Guides to help teachers target state standards in a well-timed manner, this new resource requires training and development. By nature, teachers do not stop teaching unless all students within the classroom understand the concept thus impeding learning gains for a large percentage of students. Job-embedded training is the logical and necessary next step to effectively utilize the Pacing Guide as a district-wide resource.
2. **Common Core Standards**
 - The pending alignment of the Virgin Island Department of Education to the Common Core Standards presents a challenge in St. Croix as it does in all districts. The deep rigor and relevance which comes along with the new standards will require the evolution of teaching in the classroom to ensure that the learning that takes place in St. Croix classrooms results in a greater depth of knowledge than ever before. While this is a major undertaking, efforts to start transition instructors to understand Common Core standards now are necessary to avoid a tumultuous and uncertain transition in the years to come.

3. Intervention Strategy

- Effective instruction though a cornerstone of student academic achievement, cannot transform education without the necessary curricular initiatives and student placement. Specifically, struggling learners necessitate a bold and innovative approach that goes beyond traditional instructional methods. Once the proper intervention curriculum is selected, it then becomes necessary to ensure that the appropriate students are matched to intervention curricula based on their needs. One area of improvement for the School District of St. Croix is to ensure that intervention curriculum is not used for bubble students but for struggling learners. Another challenge is develop and implement an intervention strategy and “path” for retained students that require a curriculum that targets credit recovery and the remediation of foundational knowledge.

4. Assessments

- Research shows that proper overall integration of standards, curriculum-based interim assessments, and individual teacher accountability for helping all students meet interim goals, tied to challenging year-end goals are key components of effective teaching and learning. While the School District of St. Croix utilizes various effective assessment products, District Leaders have found that there is a significant overlap in the types of assessments used to determine the same or similar student competencies. Assessment resources such as Gates (grades 3 -10) and Success Maker (grades 1-6) must be administered in a more strategic manner as a type of comprehensive assessment puzzle where each piece addresses a separate and appropriate student competency both by grade and by subject.

WORK PLAN #3: INITIATIVES

Initiative 3.1: Curriculum Re-Alignment

Develop a student-centered curriculum through the alignment of student data points, state standards, and national best-practice research to provide all students with a world-class education and prepare them for the global economy and digital millennium they live in.

Recommended Activities

Language Arts/Reading

1. The district’s leadership and curriculum team should conduct an analysis of the data trends in the area of Language Arts/Reading to identify the common strengths and weaknesses among the current student population within the schools. During the analysis, the team should pay close attention to the rising students’ data i.e. 3rd grade to 4th grade to determine changes in academic performance.
2. The district, herein and within Initiative 3.1 defined as the Superintendent, Department Chairs, District administrative staff, and school-based administrative staff will design a District Pacing Guide that will be aligned to the Common Core and state standards to guide instruction in Language Arts and Reading classes in grades K-12 while keeping the school calendar at the forefront of the design and planning of instruction. This pacing guide should provide teachers with the guidance necessary to deliver instruction that assures students’ literacy levels are appropriate and align to their current grade levels.

3. The district will design an instructional framework for teaching reading and language arts that will be based on the six components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and oral language. This framework will set the expectation for each reading and language arts block throughout the district and; specifically, it will allow instructors to understand what a specific instructional segment should look like i.e. reading block and the particular activities should be taking place within this segment.
 - In order to promote the consistency and efficacy of instruction, the instructional framework should include but not be limited to the use of explicit instruction, whole group instruction, small group data-driven differentiated instruction, higher-order questioning strategies and research-based literacy strategies.
4. District personnel will work with school-site principals to develop district-wide guidelines for the master schedule based on the instructional framework developed above. Each principal will then create a school-specific master schedule that is aligned to these guidelines but also takes into account the school's student population and teacher allocation. Each master schedule should incorporate the data derived through implementation of Initiatives 1.1 and 1.2.
5. The district will provide a cadre of internal or external highly qualified reading coaches who will model lessons, analyze data, and provide professional development in research-based literacy instruction. The coaches should support the implementation of the Pacing Guides with fidelity in each classroom across the district and will receiving training and professional development in alignment with initiative 6.5, "Coaching Program Re-Design".
6. The district will provide a venue in each reading and language arts classroom so that students are supported by technology-based focused interventions centered on students needs i.e. Reading Plus, Achieve3000.

Mathematics

1. The district's leadership and curriculum team should conduct an analysis of the data trends in the area of Mathematics to identify the common strengths and weaknesses among the current student population within the schools. During the analysis, the team should pay close attention to the rising students' data i.e. 3rd grade to 4th grade to determine changes in academic performance.
2. The district will design a District Pacing guide that will enrich the mathematics experiences of both teachers and students across each classroom by integrating the Common Core and state standards that build on fundamental mathematics strands and integrates mathematics into other subjects in a chronological manner. The Pacing Guide should be based upon an extensive body of research on how students across the district learn mathematics and should provide opportunities for all students to be exposed to the teaching and learning that develops mathematical proficiency appropriate to each student's grade level.
3. The district will design an instructional framework that will be founded on the following principles to guide the Mathematics teaching and learning: learning requires the active participation of the student, students learn in a variety of ways and at different rates, and learning is both an individual and a group process. The framework will set the expectation that teachers understand that new mathematical concepts and skills are developed through real world problem-solving opportunities and if and only if students are engaged in a multi-modal manner.
4. The district will implement extensive professional development for teachers on Cooperative Learning strategies for mathematics that will enable small groups of students to discuss, explore, discover, conjecture, and use appropriate technology to develop concept meaning. This will ensure that whole group collaboration will be followed with discussion of the specific concepts, connections and predictions.
5. The district will implement intervention programs that will recapture and close the gap students have in numeracy skills and concepts because as they become more proficient in this mathematical area they will be more confident and motivated in the expression of their mathematical ability i.e. Smart Tutor.

6. District personnel will work with school-site principals to develop district-wide guidelines for the master schedule based on the instructional framework developed above. Each principal will then create a school-specific master schedule that is aligned to these guidelines but also takes into account the school's student population and teacher allocation.
7. The district will provide a cadre of internal or external highly qualified mathematics coaches who will model lessons, analyze data, and provide professional development in research-based mathematics instructional methodologies. The coaches should support the implementation of the Pacing Guides with fidelity in each classroom across the district and ensure that instruction empowers students to learn to enjoy and value mathematics, think analytically, and understand the role of mathematics in everyday life. Furthermore, training and professional development for the coaches should be aligned to initiative 6.5.

Science

1. The district's leadership and curriculum team should conduct an analysis of the data trends in the area of Science to identify the common strengths and weaknesses among the current student population within the schools. During the analysis, the team should pay close attention to the rising students' data i.e. 3rd grade to 4th grade to determine changes in academic performance.
2. The district will design a District Pacing guide that will guide science teachers to teach a scope and sequence that will cover each of the four science clusters found in the National Standards in depth: Earth/Space, Life/Environmental, Physical/Chemical, and Scientific Thinking.
3. The district will enforce an instructional framework for science that requires teachers to use Bybee's model, known as the Five E's: Engage, Explore, Explain, Evaluate, and Extend. This will direct teachers and their students to utilize the scientific process through the use of essential, higher-order, critical thinking strategies in the development of hands-on inquiry based investigations.
4. The district will provide a cadre of internal or external highly qualified science coaches who will model lessons, analyze data, and provide professional development that is aligned to Bybee's model. The coaches should support the implementation of the Pacing Guides with fidelity in each classroom across the district and ensure that instruction empowers students to learn to enjoy science and practice its inquiry based thinking in everyday life. Furthermore, training and professional development for the coaches should be aligned to initiative 6.5.
5. The district should create an appropriate course progression at the middle school and high school level that will ensure a cohesive instructional path in the area of science for all students.
 - The course sequence should take into account the foundational skills students need not only each current course and the next grade level or course level, but also for and how to more effectively prepare the students for the national assessments that will be integrated into educational programming under the new Common Core Standards. The goal of this progression should be to increase participation and success in Honors and Advanced Placement courses in the area of science in alignment with the STEM national initiatives.
6. The district should create a supplement to the Science Pacing Guide entitled "Essential Labs". This document should include the essential labs that the district wants each student to experience at each grade level. The labs should be aligned to the Common Core, course progressions, and state standards. District personnel should work with school-site administrators to ensure that teachers are able to provide the necessary venues and materials to complete the essential labs.

Social Studies

1. The district will design a District Pacing Guide that will be aligned to the Common Core and state standards to guide instruction in social studies in grades K-12 while keeping the school calendar at the forefront of the design and planning of instruction. This pacing guide should provide teachers with guidance to ensure that all students receive instruction that will enable them to have the content, concepts, and skills they need to become knowledgeable and informed citizens in a diverse community and increasingly independent world.
2. The district will develop a bank of lessons that will allow teachers to pull resources and provide students the opportunities to learn and apply the lessons from the study of history, geography, political science, and economics. These lessons should help students develop a global perspective and an appreciation of cultures other than their own upon completion of the K-12 instructional program. Lessons should also be geared towards a very global and cosmopolitan perspective to push students to the *world-class* level of education.
3. The district will develop an instructional framework for teaching social studies that will ensure the use of a variety of teaching methods, instructional materials and evaluative techniques to achieve program goals and to actively engage students in the learning of social studies concepts. This framework should ensure that teachers are integrating critical thinking and reading and writing skills throughout the curriculum, promoting multicultural education, emphasize geography and current events throughout the curriculum, emphasize a global perspective, encourage the examination of controversial issues, conduct ongoing action research, and use technology to access the many resources available for the teaching of these concepts. Tangible examples of activities should be included within the framework to demonstrate to teachers of what social studies instruction should look like.
4. The district will use the internal or external reading coaches to support the social studies teachers with the coaching continuum and the implementation of the Pacing Guides with fidelity in each classroom across the district. Furthermore, training and professional development for the coaches should be aligned to initiative 6.5.
5. The district will collaborate with school-site administrators to provide a venue in each social studies classroom to allow students to access technology-focused enrichments centered on students needs i.e. National Geographic Online.

Initiative 3.2: Bilingual Programming

A diverse locale such as the Island of St. Croix necessitates a developed and well-established Bi-Lingual program to ensure that students are able to communicate well in languages beyond their native tongues.

Recommended Activities

1. The district will institute a Comprehensive Bilingual Program that will offer specialized programs focused on building students' capacity to communicate orally not only in English, but also in another language with proficiency that is commensurate with their experiential and educational level, age, interests. As part of the program, students will also develop the ability to interact effectively with groups using those languages.
2. The district will ensure that all students who are English Language Learners (ELL-AYP subgroup) shall participate in programs that will enable such students to communicate and function successfully in English in an academic and social environment.
 - District and school-site personnel will collaborate to analyze the current student population and ensure that all ELL students are classified appropriately.
 - School-site administrators and instructors will analyze the school's ELL population to place each student in the ELL-program based course or program that is most appropriate to his or her ELL-based needs.

3. The district will ensure that all students have the opportunity and shall be strongly urged to participate in programs designed to enable them to communicate and function successfully in a global environment in which foreign languages are often utilized. The main language offerings should be driven by the business and entrepreneurship needs within the community.
4. The district will require that English Language Learners participate in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) for two hours daily. This customized language arts/reading program should include, as a foundation: listening comprehension, oral expression, pronunciation, reading, and writing, as these components support the skills and concepts presented in the regular language arts curriculum.
5. The district will require that students who are emergent English speakers to participate in Curriculum Content in the Home Language (CCHL), a class with a framework that includes instruction in the home language in the areas of social sciences, science, and/or mathematics with the same instructional objectives as are implemented in the regular curriculum in English.
6. The district will institute a Home Language Assistance Program that will provide tutorial services in mathematics, science, social science, and computer literacy to all English Language Learners (ELL), regardless of their language proficiency.
7. The district will phase in second language programs at the elementary schools by requiring at least 100 minutes of instruction weekly in each child's designated or selected foreign language. This language should have two tracks, one for native speakers of that particular language, and one for speakers of other languages to ensure instructional differentiation is both tailored and effective.
8. The district will phase in second language programs at the secondary schools by offering world languages that may include but not be limited to Chinese, French, German, Haitian-Creole, Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Russian, Japanese, Portuguese, and Spanish. The selection of the language should be driven by the needs within the business community and background of student population. The second language programs should also take into account the teacher certifications and preparation level of the instructors teaching those languages.

NOTE: All language courses should emphasize functional communication skills within contexts appropriate to the culture(s).

Initiative 3.3: Special Education Programming

While the School District of St. Croix strives to provide each student a world-class education, it also understands that the approach to accomplish this is not the same for each student. Therefore, Special Education programming must be both strategic and prescriptive to the specific needs of the Special Education population within the district.

1. The district will provide a variety of programs and services to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities within each school. These programs will ensure that the instruction for students with disabilities is aligned to the district-developed Pacing Guides thus aligning instruction for these students to Common Core and state standards, in line with the "inclusion"-focused education movement.
2. To further align with the principles of inclusion, the district will ensure that appropriate professional development is provided to teachers assigned to the general education population so that these teachers may better incorporate the goals and objectives of a special student's Individual Educational Plan (IEP). This development will allow instructors to utilize the most appropriate instructional methodologies and delivery models when students with disabilities are assigned to their class and will thus provide ample opportunities for these students to learn and achieve individual outcomes in the "least restrictive environment".
3. The district will continue to expand the program offerings available to serve students with Autism Spectrum Disorders, Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities, Intellectual Disabilities, Physical Impaired, Other Health Impaired, Specific Learning Disabilities, Speech and Language Impaired, Dual Sensory Impaired, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and Visually Impaired. It will also make sure these programs include a continuum of services with delivery options in the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities.

4. The district will provide school leadership with appropriate professional development on how to effectively implement and monitor an effective program for students with disabilities. This program will be focused on allowing all students with disabilities to achieve state standards and graduate with a positive outcome thus becoming productive members of the community and workforce. It is highly recommended that this subgroup's academic and social progress become part of each school administrator's evaluation process.
5. The district should continue to make a great effort to expand and sustain inclusive practices with a goal to develop programmatic options for students in their home or proximity schools.
6. The district will begin to offer a wide array of vocational programs for students with disabilities ages 14-22 such as Community-Based Instruction, Student Managed In-School Businesses, and many other programs in collaboration with community agencies to offer these individuals the opportunity to contribute to the community while embittering their own lives.

Initiative 3.4: Career and Technical Education

The School District of St. Croix will engage in immediate and tangible initiatives to provide instruction that is geared towards developing an educated, prepared, adaptable and competitive workforce both within the community and globally.

Recommended Activities

1. The district should incorporate a more deliberate Career and Technical Education (CTE) curricula include planning, developing, and implementing career education in middle and senior high schools, alternative high schools and adult schools. The outcome of these efforts should be centered around the business and community needs within the Island of St. Croix as determined by open forums, surveys, and patterns in vocational openings on the Island.
2. District personnel, in collaboration with school-site personnel, should determine career and technical tracks specific to each school site to increase the level of specialization and school-site competency for that particular school with a specific track. The master list of career and technical tracks available within the district should be based on the needs determined in step 1 above.
3. The district should develop a CTE program for students that is comprised of a multi-year sequence of courses that integrates knowledge acquisition and real "on the job" experiences to push students to higher levels of technical competencies through a well-integrated curriculum. This program should provide students with a pathway to postsecondary education course credit and/or career opportunities by developing and enriching academic and occupational competencies. The competencies should align to the business and community needs as described in step 1 above and may be developed through student activities such as but not limited to the following:
 - Working in student-managed school businesses
 - Visiting business organizations on the Island and hearing first-hand from the organization's employees the type of competencies that students should be working to develop
 - Engaging and enrolling in internships and cooperative learning opportunities that allow students to utilize concepts acquired in the classroom in the real world
4. The district should provide teachers with research-based professional development to equip them with instructional strategies such as contextual teaching, differentiated instruction, horizontal and vertical curriculum alignment, and the continuous improvement model so that these components can be incorporated into all areas of study.

5. The district should utilize the CTE programs as a vehicle to overcome low performance and increase literacy by providing it as an intervention at the secondary level for struggling learners. Research shows that student engagement levels increase if students are more easily able to make a connection between what they are learning in the classroom and competencies that are necessary in the real-world.

Initiative 3.5: Implementing Student-Centered Intervention Programs with Fidelity

The district will provide struggling students additional time and support to recapture their academic skills. This learning support system will intervene by providing a systematic, timely, and directive program that will meet their needs.

Recommended Activities

1. The district will require teachers to quickly identify students who are in need of additional time and support to ensure that these students are provided with help as soon as they experience difficulty rather than utilizing summer school, retention, or a remedial course to address their needs.
 - The district should provide teachers with professional development on how to design and effectively implement an intervention program to assist students in strengthening their ability in areas of identified need. The professional development should also show teachers how to examine the student's data and determine the student's areas of strength and areas of necessary improvement.
2. The district will require that struggling learners be placed on a weekly progress-monitoring system to provide an ongoing communication venue for parents to understand and help guide their child's performance. This process is to be initiated by a meeting with the teacher, the parent, and guidance counselor, in which the academic performance of the child will be discussed and each stakeholder will sign a contract that clarifies what each party will do to help the student meet the standards of his or her grade or course.
3. For students that require credit recovery or an alternative curriculum due to behavior problems or other "unique track" scenarios, the district should provide an instructional program that is aligned to National and State standards that features highly-qualified teachers delivering content rich lessons, supported by online activities. These struggling students should be able to learn at their own pace, make meaningful academic gains, and recover credits to the maximum level possible.
 - This particular program should provide learning opportunities for students in a computer lab setting to engage students in an alternative and student-centered learning process. It should focus on courses that are typically failed by students based on the grade analysis conducted by the district.
4. The district will require that teachers create reading and mathematics centers within the classroom to provide opportunities for small group/individual assistance and activities for struggling students as needed.
 - The district will require schools to implement small group guided instruction which will identify groups of students (5 or less) who need additional assistance with a concept and work with them in a small group while the rest of the class is working on independent practice. Small group instruction will address individual needs effectively and efficiently and increase student understanding and grasp of course content.
 - The district will provide schools with reading intervention resources for elementary students that will focus on High Risk, Levels I and II, and/or Tier 2 or 3 students in addition to the reading block. This intervention should be a comprehensive reading intervention that meets the needs of all struggling readers and should target the priority skills and strategies that are referred to by the basal but not expanded upon. This reading intervention should focus on the essential six components of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, oral language, and comprehension) and should be teacher-directed and face-to-face.
5. The district will utilize extended-hour programming to supplement the intervention efforts of instructors and provide students the additional time as needed in congruence with Work Plan #2 and; specifically, that is aligned to the system of standards developed in Initiative 2.1.

- The district will implement a Saturday Academy that is founded on high-impact lessons in science, reading and mathematics.
 - The district will institute a comprehensive after school study-time program that is required for struggling students to develop effective student habits in all subject areas. This dedicated “quiet time” is provided for students to complete class assignments, complete homework assignments, work on long term projects, and prepare for tests. The facilitator of this program must be in consistent communication with the student’s classroom teacher to learn exactly what homework each student needs to complete and monitors the completion of that work, and notified the classroom teacher of the student’s efforts.
6. The district will provide exciting technology and media-based instructional components to supplement student intervention programming. These web-based skill-builders must be part of an initiative that is focused on student interests and abilities while targeting specific student learning deficiencies and must align to Initiative 7.2 of this Strategic Plan, “Tailoring to the 21st Century Learner”.
- One such intervention program should invite students to read engaging and informative passages so that they become more fluent, learn more vocabulary words, and use reading to better comprehend the world that they live in.
 - The district should provide a browser-based reading intervention system that uses innovative technology to provide individualized, scaffolded silent reading practice for students in second grade and higher. This program should supplement phonics and oral reading instruction to provide rapid and sustainable comprehension and silent reading fluency gains. It should also develop sustained attention, automatic word recognition, grade-appropriate reading rates, enhanced vocabulary, and improved reading comprehension.
 - The district should provide a technology program that address differentiated instruction for grades 2 through 12 using a web-based individualized learning solution. This program should correlate lexiles reading abilities with content readability of non-fiction current event articles. Students should be engaged in learning specific skills required for content-area reading. It should include the Five-Step Literacy Routine, a research-based daily core sequence, provides for a formal and an informal writing experience.
 - The district should provide an interactive online simulation that drives conceptual understanding in mathematics and science. This online solution should assist teachers in implementing research-proven instructional strategies and help students, of all ability levels, in developing conceptual understanding. It should also help teachers supplement and enhance instruction with powerful interactive visualizations of math and science concepts that the data is showing as weaknesses across the district. Students should be able to manipulate key variables, generate and test hypotheses, and engage in extensive “what-if...then” experimentation.

Initiative 3.6: Assessment and Progress Monitoring

The district will implement a comprehensive and on-going progress monitoring assessment strategy in order to monitor student progress and provide the opportunity for a more dynamic view of progress to drive instructional delivery that tailors to real-time and relevant student needs.

Recommended Activities

1. The School District of St. Croix will provide a program to all relevant stakeholders that will clearly outline important “assessment points” throughout the year that will include but not be limited to classroom assessments, including teacher-made tests, customized tests using a consistent standard and question item bank, authentic assessments such as portfolios and in-class performance tasks.

2. The School District of St. Croix will require teachers to use tests that are aligned with instructional materials, such as unit tests, to assess student mastery and identify instructional gaps. Furthermore, instructional programs, both electronic and paper-pencil, should be embedded with assessments that can provide real-time progress data.
3. The School District of St. Croix will ensure that all schools will have access to the District's common assessment. These tests should be formative assessments specifically designed to provide a snapshot of the learning progress of students at several points throughout the school year and to provide a basis for projecting the expected performance of those students on state assessments.
 - o A baseline assessment should be administered at the beginning of each school year to determine the effects of any learning growth or academic regression that took place over the summer break. This will allow teachers to begin the year with a much clearer picture of the students' current instructional needs as opposed to data solely from the spring state test.
4. A continuation of the baseline assessment referred to in step 3 above should be administered twice more throughout the year but should be differentiated in a way that captures additional academic competencies and standards picked up by the student throughout the year as per the instructional pacing guide for the student's course/grade.

Work Plan 4: Unified Culture of Excellence

Work Plan #4:

Create a unified culture of excellence at the District, School, Classroom, and Community levels.

The facilitation and development of a Unified Culture Of Excellence at the district and school level focuses on the driving force behind academics, behavior, climate and data. The primary goal for establishing a Culture of Excellence is to improve student outcomes. This belief is predicated upon the premise that all students **CAN LEARN** when they are actively involved in the learning process with defined roles and responsibilities and when adult stakeholders fully invest their shared efforts toward student success.

In most underperforming schools, this involves a shift in the traditional educational paradigm. A Unified Culture of Excellence is a mindset that influences the management, organization, operation and monitoring of student progress and measures of success within district and school systems. This approach is about changing stakeholder belief systems, collective norms and mores, principles, responsibilities, aims, goals and will ultimately result in prompt and consistent organizational procedures, policies, rules and practices.

The provision of quality learning experiences and the achievement of optimal student learning begin with a school culture that values high expectations, respects and embraces diversity, supports innovation and creativity, and addresses diverse talents and learning styles. Therefore, in order to improve the morale and productivity of the staff and students they lead, principals must have a clear understanding of their school's culture. The school's culture speaks to a set of values, goals, vision, mission, principles, procedures, and practices that help define the school. It has also been described as the social "glue" that holds the school or organization together and expresses the values, social ideas, and beliefs shared by school members. Effective school cultures are characterized by trust, honesty, and a willingness to share and embrace feedback and guidance.

School culture has a significant impact on student learning and achievement. For example, in one school teachers and the principal are excited and confident about the work they do in educating students and improving the school. Stakeholders find joy in working with each other and transmit this enthusiasm to their students. In another school, the teachers and the principal are in a perpetual state of discontent and lack confidence in their work, thus constantly experiencing a sense of futility regarding educating students. This sense of despair spills over to the students and inevitably results in a lack of student and school success.

Unified Culture of Excellence: Needs Assessment

1. Does the district have an effective communications plan in place to provide families, staff, and community members with ongoing updates.

- The boldest and most well-planned transformation initiative, however effective in theory, cannot be implemented with fidelity unless the implementation is supported by clear and honest communication between necessary stakeholders. Like many school districts, the School District of St. Croix needs to put forth a consolidated effort to align all stakeholders. Currently, information and initiatives are not being shared vertically or horizontally thus leading to the redoubling of efforts, initiatives that work against each other, and great levels of misunderstanding. Particularly, the evident disconnect between district leaders and school leaders is a key barrier to school and district transformation. Additionally, while stewards of the district cite the lack of parental and community involvement, as a major barrier to student success, there is no concerted

effort to alleviate this challenge. In order for parents and community leaders to engage in the mission of the district, they must be provided with a venue or platform to develop, establish, and sustain levels of support. Great leaders and thinkers often purport that perception becomes reality. School and district leaders do not have the link with the public relations department necessary to shape and establish the proper perception and communication for successful school transformation. As one administrator stated during a work plan development session, "We must toot our own horns." Further adding to deleterious perceptions of the school district are teacher attendance issues that decrease morale and do not allow for effective communication. Only when all stakeholders are provided with avenues to engage and support the district will the educational values at home and in the community align with those values that are in the classrooms and offices of the School District of St. Croix.

WORK PLAN #4: INITIATIVES

Recommended Activities

Note: The Unified Culture of Excellence and the communication strategies described therein is a Work Plan that should serve as a conduit for the other six work plans in this strategic plan and is written as such.

1. Create a branding statement for the strategic plan and the new instructional era in St. Croix. Consider the statement: Providing a world-class education for all students.
2. Communicate with the Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE) to express the content of the strategic plan. A meeting should be scheduled to discuss the work plans and the strategies that will be implemented. This conversation should include roles and responsibilities and timelines for each phase of implementation as well as a discussion of the branding statement created above. As part of the collaboration with the VIDE:
 - A crosswalk between the state-sponsored Educational System Improvement Process (eSIP) and this strategic plan should be developed collaboratively to capitalize on synergies between the two plans and ensure stakeholder alignment from the State.
 - The crosswalk above should be utilized to develop a cheat sheet for school-site principals to ensure that they are aligned to both the eSIP and the strategic plan but not duplicating efforts prescribed by both. A meeting should be scheduled to discuss the cross-walk and cheat sheet with principals from all schools.
 - A separate meeting should be held with principals from the six restructuring schools, as these principals will require additional training on highlighting the implementation of both plans.
3. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the current communication process through hiring an expert in field to conduct the comprehensive assessment and provide the district with appropriate information so that the Superintendent can make modifications as needed for an appropriate communication to take place regarding this strategic plan. The superintendent should then share results of the assessment and strategies recommended with senior leadership team.
4. Once the assessment of the current communication process is completed, identify key individuals and events within the communication process i.e. the individuals responsible for developing the messages, the individuals responsible for disseminating the message, and the different target audiences and stakeholders that receive those message and the frequency with which this occurs.
5. Realign the communication process analyzed above to ensure that the communication delivered to each target audience is owned by one individual so that he or she may develop consistency, momentum, and rapport with that specific target audience.

6. It is recommended that the “owner” of the messaging for each target audience is a stakeholder within that audience i.e. a principal within the school district delivers communication to all principals within the School District of St. Croix. The following is a recommended list of target audience stakeholder groups:
 - Principals and Assistant Principals (recommended owner: Principal)
 - District Administrative Personnel (recommended owner: Superintendent)
 - Business leaders, community and municipal organizations, and local foundations i.e. churches, business, housing associations, teacher’s unions, etc... (Recommended owner(s): Businessman involved with the School District, Preacher, Teacher Union President)
 - Parents (Recommend owner: parent)
 - Students (Recommended owner: Student Council President)
 - The Virgin Island Department of Education (Recommended Owner: Superintendent or Deputy Superintendents)
 - The Media (Recommended Owner: Superintendent)
7. Develop a Strategic Communication Committee that is comprised of the stakeholder message owners described above. This committee should meet regularly throughout the implementation of the Strategic Plan to collaboratively discuss and create the messaging and message delivery vehicles for each type of target audience stakeholder. These individuals should also serve as a method to measure the pulse of their respective stakeholder groups to ensure that all stakeholder perspectives are included as part of the communication effort of the Strategic Plan and that each communication that goes out to specific target audience stakeholders is tailored accordingly.
 - Schedule a standing meeting with the committee through the implementation of the strategic plan to collaborate and discuss the communication of this work.
 - Discuss the branding statement with stakeholder message “owners” and how it should be it on all district and site materials including brochures, newsletters, displays, policy documents, advertisements, and letterhead.
 - Discuss the use of the branding statement in speeches and presentations when the stakeholder message “owner” conducts media interviews or speaks to parents and public audiences about issues in education.
8. The Strategic Communication Committee should review the analysis of the communication process performed in Step 1 of this Initiative to outline all of the mediums of communication/message delivery including the school website, print materials, digital media etc... so that each stakeholder message owner can understand the communication vehicles available for message delivery.
 - It is important that efforts are made to release a memorialized version of communication beyond just the initial message i.e. an email newsletter about a parent initiative that would serve as follow up to a district parent meeting.
9. Once stakeholder message “owners” and communication mediums are identified, it is important to clarify the flow of information within the district as a result of this new strategic plan and the corresponding communication plan:
 - Distribute organizational charts to all staff showing decision-making processes, reporting protocol, and accountability structures that will be in place to support the implementation of the strategic plan (use data from the assessment to revise organizational charts and job functions as needed). The organizational charts should include areas of staff responsibility for communication. It is recommended that stakeholder message “owners” should drive these responsibilities so that the message stays consistent.

10. Upon completion of the organizational chart above and throughout the implementation of the Strategic Plan, provide ongoing training and support for administrators in effective communication with staff and the public with emphasis on communicating the work plans of the strategic plan:
 - Provide continuous training sessions as part of principals' meetings on components of the strategic plan and how they train their teachers and staff to disseminate communication within the school.
 - Provide principals with a bi-weekly public relations fact sheet and other easy-to-use communications tools as needed when new areas of the strategic plan are being implemented or when issues arise.
 - Create web-based form for schools to utilize when reporting an upcoming event that supports the strategic plan's successful implementation and impact the Superintendent's office so communication can be released appropriately to all stakeholders.
11. The Strategic Communication Committee should collaborate with the District's IT department and a website designer to design a website that captures each of the seven Work Plans in the Strategic Plan in a way that allows communication about each work plan to flow naturally to the intended target audience i.e. a page for each stakeholder target audience.
12. The Strategic Communication Committee should collaborate with the District's IT department to create a Facebook page and other forms of digital media that serve the following purposes:
 - Highlight successes and accomplishments in the District, specifically those that are outlined in this Strategic Plan.
 - Advertise events and message and serve as a medium of communication to stakeholder target audiences
 - Serve as a method by which stakeholders of the School District of St. Croix, i.e. parents, can communicate with each other and/or other stakeholders.
13. The Strategic Communication Committee should collaborate with District and school based personnel to develop print materials and other forms of media i.e. screen savers and PowerPoint slide templates that display and highlight the Strategic Plan and its seven work plans. This will ensure that a consistent and controlled message is coming across to all stakeholders with regards to strategic changes taking place within the District as a whole and within each individual school.
14. District leadership should collaborate amongst each other to release a monthly newsletter inclusive of messaging that addresses all stakeholder types to communicate recent key accomplishments and future initiatives across the district.
15. Each school's principal and his or her leadership should collaborate to develop and release a newsletter that addresses all stakeholders of that school to communicate recent key accomplishments and future initiatives of the school.
16. The Strategic Communication Committee should develop a timeline of major events for the current school year based on this Strategic Plan and the communication initiatives within this Work Plan. The timeline should include brief descriptions of major events and should take into account the communication goals and processes outlined in this Work Plan.
17. Once all Strategic Plan protocol and initiatives are in place, the District Superintendent should schedule a press conference that announces the commencement of the Strategic Plan and outlines the communication streams that general and specific stakeholders may look forward to so that they may stay abreast of change within the District and know when and how they may provide input.
18. School and District personnel should make efforts to be visible in the community to share the work of this Strategic Plan that include but are not limited to:
 - Attending all community organization meetings.
 - Encouraging participation in local service clubs by school officials.
 - Seeking business partnerships through contact with local parent groups and private sector that could support the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

19. Establish a Superintendent's Resource Council that is to meet with the Superintendent and enter into dialogue about the academic achievement of students in the district and the implementation of the strategic plan. Select two representatives from each school site and establish a two-way communication venue with these individuals through a minimum of a monthly meeting to hold forums for discussion.
20. Establish a Superintendent's Parent Advisory that is to meet with the Superintendent and enter into dialogue, through a monthly meeting, about the academic achievement of students in the district and the implementation of the strategic plan. Each school should be represented by its PTA President; and, one additional member, if the school has over 500 children.
21. The Strategic Communication Committee, lead by the Superintendent, should develop multiple initiatives to continuously monitor the flow of communication and ensure that input from all relevant stakeholders is being acted upon throughout the implementation of the Strategic Plan.
 - Conduct electronic surveys at district and school-site levels to provide feedback on the ongoing implementation of the strategic plan and on the flow of information and communication throughout the implementation of the Strategic Plan.
 - Establish an informational email account to receive feedback from the community. This email account is to be managed regularly by someone in the Superintendent's office.
 - Create a Frequently Asked Questions document that is a live method of updating the community on items related to the strategic plan and can explain current initiatives as well as prepare district and stakeholders for those that are upcoming.

Work Plan 5: Leadership Effectiveness

Work Plan #5: Build the capacity of the district and school leaders to become “agents of change” in order to provide a world-class education for all students.

Research related to leadership development indicates that it is a critical component in the effort to transform and turnaround schools. Leadership is a subject that is easier to talk about in the abstract than to accomplish in reality. “Caring for others, but get things done”; was an observation made by Cindy Rigsbee North Carolina’s 2009 teacher of the Year as she visited schools after she noticed that the schools she most admired were those that operated as a family. Not only were leaders in the halls and classrooms everyday, but they also established a community where people felt happy. Gordon Donaldson (2009) and colleagues indicated that “Conflict is a constant in school reform, but unless leaders learn how to step back regularly to reconnect with their own values, they will never be able to embrace the concept of an united we versus a lonely I”.

Research also indicates that leadership needs to be nurtured and supported with key information and professional development. School leaders need to learn the following strategies:

- Learn how to distribute their work (Donaldson, 2009). Leaders today are required to be both administrators and good instructional leaders who focus intently on teaching and learning^v. A 2008 Public Agenda Report characterizes leaders in two ways—as transformers or copers. Transformers have a explicit vision of what their school might be like and a can –do attitude. Copers find it impossible to free themselves from daily burdens to focus on the tasks they regard most important.
- Know your priorities, (Budge and Parret 2008) In their studies of high performing poverty schools they discovered that sustained school improvement usually began when leaders focused on essentials^{vi}. These leaders rallied the staff to address such basic questions as, Are we eliminating policies and practice that manufacture low achievement? Can all our students read? They were able to focus the energy of the faculty toward the changes that needed to take place.
- Seize your authority, (Hess 2009) reminds us that broom wielding leadership can indeed be beneficial^{viii}. However, is too often hampered by debilitating timidity. Research indicates the school and district administrators learn early to tread gingerly, get clearance before acting and abide by established procedures. Hess urges school leaders to look beyond the established boundaries of what is permissible and welcome non-fractional thinking and leaders, especially from those outside the profession.
- “Whether you believe in shaking things up or building consensus or doing both, you will find that National Academics Educational Partners, Inc. will help you bring your own practice and beliefs into focus. Leadership development is a work in progress and the definitive picture has yet to be taken. What you will be doing in partnership with NAEP will count tremendously towards taking the picture”

Leadership Effectiveness: Needs Assessment

Current Challenges Around Leadership Effectiveness

1. Does the School District of St. Croix have a strong culture of leadership development that provides leaders with the skill sets necessary to succeed?
 - The 21st Century challenges that are confronted by leaders in today’s educational landscape, coupled with the lack of time to transition into the roles once appointed due to the timing of the openings require St. Croix to have an ongoing leadership development program that is more structured, purposeful, and aligned to the district needs. During the process followed to create this Educational Plan, it was concluded

that defined structures and protocols are essential in developing more effective district and school leaders, especially if they build upon and facilitate the culture of leadership within the District. Currently, there is a lack of an official or unofficial leadership pre-service program to help potential leaders develop strength in working with both students and adults to prepare them with the skill sets needed to accelerate education for all students, regardless of profile. Leaders must be equipped not only with the instructional management skills necessary to improve instruction from a content area point of view, they must also be trained in the ability to delegate and how to recognize when to delegate, drive, or do. Until deliberate training is provided, the ability to challenge status quo to provide a world class education for all students is compromised.

2. Are the roles, responsibilities, and structures in place for leadership positions clear and consistent throughout the district?

- Across the nation today, one of the key components that lead the ongoing improvement and development of on-the-job training is a set of clearly delineated roles and responsibilities for both school and district leaders with consistent progress monitoring feedback. Leaders in the District struggle to improve because they are not aware of the benchmarks that they must reach, or the duties that they are responsible for. In addition, those benchmarks that they are aware of are not aligned to the current national trends that have moved into having student achievement be a large percentage of the evaluation components. Furthermore, the right leader behaviors are not currently rewarded within the current system because contractually there are no incentives allowed for improved student achievement. In other words, whether you do an effective job or not, you get the same pay. In order for effective transformation to take place, leaders that are not afraid to make the right decisions and become “change agents” and support the appropriate initiatives that meet the needs of students must be provided with incentives, recognition, and internal structures to perpetuate a successful leadership culture in the School District of St. Croix.

3. Are leaders in the School District of St. Croix provided with meaningful and job-embedded professional development that is reinforced by follow up observation and evaluations?

- Professional development that is impactful in changing leadership practices of current practitioners must follow the National Professional Development Standards of Plan, Deliver, Follow Up, and Monitor. It is important to keep in mind that the most profound and research-based professional development techniques has little chance of success without the appropriate amount of clear expectation of what should change as a result of the sessions attended. Furthermore, without follow-up from the trainer and/or supervisor to determine if the leadership practices learned are being used in the day-to-day operation and the ongoing focused networking opportunities for best practice sharing for leadership these lessons don't institutionalize new practices. Several leaders within the District agree that there is currently an over-abundance of professional development, in some cases irrelevant to the challenges currently being confronted, with an underwhelming amount of job-embedded training and follow through. “Accountability without support”, which means that leaders are held accountable to a standard that they may have been exposed to in a seminar, but not effectively trained on, presents a loss of momentum and confidence for leadership trainers and trainees alike. Leaders must be held accountable to measurable, quantifiable standards to a level that is aligned to the training and resources that they receive. If a leader is not guided or supported by his or her trainer or supervisor beyond initial exposure to a new concept or technique, he or she has little chance of perpetuating that newfound knowledge into an effective, consistent, and healthy leadership habit.

WORK PLAN #5: INITIATIVES

Initiative 5.1: Viable Leader Candidate Pool

Create a viable pool of leaders who will be readily available to fill openings that may arise as a result of attrition or changes in leadership that are required due to lack of performance. These candidates should be ready with the capacity to serve as instructional leaders and catalysts for change that will positively impact student achievement in St. Croix.

Recommended Activities

1. The District Senior Leadership team should select the top three principals, assistant principals, and department/grade level chairs to analyze what makes these educator professionals successful in their leadership roles.
2. The School District of St. Croix will work with the VIDE and local administrative unions to leverage the successful characteristics of a leader in STX determined above to revise the current job description and include all necessary benchmarks for principal, assistant principal, and department/grade level chair roles so that job descriptions are current with the national trends and set a clear expectation for what a leader in STX is accountable to in this new era of leadership.
3. The School District of St. Croix will collaborate with the local university to establish the new expectations of graduates with a degree in leadership. In addition, work to create a modular program that provides master teachers with the opportunity to pursue a degree in leadership that is founded on the specific skills needed to transform and sustain the educational programs in the School District of St. Croix at a high level of performance.
4. The School District of St. Croix will establish a district Urban Leadership Academy that will focus on preparing upcoming leaders for the many challenges that are confronted in the day-to-day instructional and operational domains in schools in St. Croix (leadership certification should be a required prior to admission into the academy).
 - This academy should be rigorous and trend-setting with the practices it exposes to the rising leaders.
 - It is highly recommended that a Request for Proposal be released for an outside expert in this area to lead the initial creation and implementation of this academy.
 - This academy should include the appointment of a mentor for each participant that will support the leader during his or her first year of appointment.
5. The School District of St. Croix will work with VIDE and local administrative unions to negotiate a change to the current contract regarding the selection of administrators, particularly around pre-requisites so that a national recruitment effort can be initiated to attract “change agents” to the district for schools that require a specialized leader in areas that may not be available in the current pool of leaders.
6. The School District of St. Croix will work with VIDE and local administrative unions to establish a differentiated compensation for principals and assistant principals with the skill set needed to influence the necessary change for schools in restructuring status.

Initiative 5.2: Need-based Leadership Professional Development

Provide ongoing professional development for principals, assistant principals, and district leadership teams to enhance their capacity and knowledge on how to lead bold and innovative change in today’s educational landscape.

Recommended Activities

1. The School District of St. Croix will release a Request for Proposal for an outside partner with expertise in leadership assessment and development to conduct a comprehensive review of all current principals, assistant principals and district leaders to determine the alignment of each individual’s redefined job responsibilities (Initiative 5.1) with

his or her actual skill set and analyze the gaps that require remediation. This review should include stakeholders from the state, district, and school as part of the Leadership Review Committee to capitalize on a well-rounded, organizational historic perspective.

2. The School District of St. Croix will work collaboratively with the outside partner selected from the RFP respondents above and the Leadership Review Committee to establish the purpose, composition and intended results of leadership professional development in STX. This scope should be created using data to drive the decision making process (i.e., AYP, Evaluation Domain Ratings).
3. The School District of St. Croix will work with the outside partner to create a three-year comprehensive professional development program that is founded on prescriptive modules that are essential to develop the skills of the current leaders. Each district and school leader should be assigned a professional development profile that delineates their current skill set and facilitates the progress monitoring of completion of the modules and allows for newly appointed administrators to receive all of the training necessary to meet district requirements.
4. The School District of St. Croix will facilitate opportunities for the principals, assistant principals, and district leaders to participate in a Leadership Learning Communities that will discuss concepts and strategies that will align with today's best-practice leadership literature and research.
5. The School District of St. Croix will provide professional development opportunities for current administrators (possible on-line/distance learning opportunities) to meet the requirements for VIDE recertification or to keep abreast of current trends in education.
6. The School District of St. Croix will observe each school and district leader using his or her professional development profile (Activity 5.2.3) as a guide to the levels of mastery he or she should display in each leadership benchmark determined in Activity 5.1.2.

Initiative 5.3: Leadership Evaluation Process

Implement an evaluation process during the 2011-2012 school year that will effectively provide ongoing feedback needed for the principal to grow professionally into an "agent of change" and instructional leader.

Recommended Activities

1. The School District of St. Croix will institute a comprehensive evaluation process in which the end in mind is for the leader being evaluated to receive evidence of his or her leadership gaps with regards to the redefined roles and responsibilities from Initiative 5.1. This evaluation process should include a structured timeline of feedback to ensure the constant support necessary for leadership development.
2. District leaders should meet with each school's principal to discuss the components of the evaluation tool and set goals and expectations for the year.
3. District leaders should meet with each school's principal to discuss strengths and areas for improvement being observed in the principal with a focus on the effective implementation of the transformational plan. In turn, the principal should meet with the assistant principals to communicate the expectations from the meeting.
4. On a bi-weekly basis, the School District of St. Croix will conduct thorough school visits and debrief with the school principal immediately afterwards. This should be done by the Superintendent or the Deputy Superintendents.
5. The School District of St. Croix will complete a mid-year evaluation of the principal primarily based upon the successful execution of the previously communicated expectations for that year. This evaluation should be discussed with the principal and should include a corrective action plan should the principal have gaps in his or her implementation of the expectations.

6. The School District of St. Croix will complete a final evaluation of the principal primarily based upon the successful execution of the previously communicated expectations for that year and provide recommendations for improvement for the following year.

Initiative 5.4: Instructional Leadership Development

Provide guidance and professional development for instructional leaders and leadership teams on how to conduct effective classroom walkthroughs based on The Framework for Teaching by Charlotte Danielson: Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy Demonstrating; Knowledge of Students, Setting Instructional Outcomes; Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources; Designing Coherent Instruction; Designing Student Assessments.

Recommended Activities

1. The School District of St. Croix will host a work session with school administrators to help them develop teachers' capacity to understand the importance of Planning and Preparation utilizing The Framework for Teaching by Charlotte Danielson: Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy Demonstrating; Knowledge of Students, Setting Instructional Outcomes; Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources; Designing Coherent Instruction; Designing Student Assessments. This work session should result in a Planning and Preparation manual that each principal or assistant principal would discuss with his or her building's teachers.
2. The School District of St. Croix will host a work session with school administrators to help them develop teachers' ability to create a Classroom Environment that is conducive to teaching and learning based on the Charlotte Danielson model mentioned above. This work session would ensure consistent standards for classrooms across the district and should result in a checklist of what an optimal classroom looks like that school administrators may use to evaluate and give recommendations to building teachers.
3. The Senior District Leadership Team or Department Chairs should schedule two to three meetings (i.e. with teacher of various classroom effectiveness levels) with the principal, assistant principals, and a teacher to model how the checklist in the activity above should be shared with teachers in a way that sets expectations for the year and facilitates discussion to outline the necessary professional development that will help that teacher accomplish those expectations.

Work Plan 6: Teacher Effectiveness

Work Plan #6:

Become smarter about who teaches our students and strategic on how their effectiveness is developed.

“Teacher effectiveness is a major influence on students’ academic success. District and school leaders can improve teacher effectiveness and address inequitable teacher distribution through how they recruit, hire, induct, develop, evaluate, advance and compensate teachers. Moreover, they can create the school conditions that foster teacher effectiveness and retention such as excellent school leadership, time for collaboration, and a culture of continuous improvement.” This challenge was set forth to us through a memo to states by the U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. Research shows that teaching is one of the world’s most challenging occupations. Teachers and leaders do not become effective overnight. The School District of St. Croix must strive to facilitate the development of a system that builds a school environment where all educators grow professionally by keeping the end in mind – proficient and educationally balanced students.

Professional development, according to Fullan (1990), is an activity or process intended to improve skills, attitudes, understandings, or performance in present or future roles^{viii}. Educators recognize that training is critical in helping schools achieve the high standards set for them. Schools that achieve excellence promote and demand continuous professional development. Wong (2004) states: “To produce effective teachers, there must be a professional development program that improves professional skills for educators at every point in their career ... The best induction programs provide connection because they are structured within learning communities where new and veteran teachers interact and treat each other with respect and are valued for their respective contributions ... Effective schools have a high-performance culture, with a trademark of collaborative responsibility for the learning of all students”

Effective teachers and leaders are supported professionals in all facets of their career. Watkins (2005) believes that “Without a strong learning community that supports new teachers, the principal faces attrition rates that jeopardize student achievement and curriculum continuity . He further states, “Principals must nurture an environment that encourages new teachers to take control of how they teach and set high standards for student achievement.” Lastly, he stresses that “induction not only harnesses the enthusiasm and professional support research has shown necessary for novices, but builds an ongoing commitment to professional learning for all staff members ... building administrators must develop an environment that encourages teacher autonomy and contributes to the greater school community.” Moreover, Watkins (2005) explores the study group format and explains his belief that study groups are “another vehicle for learning in practice for the novice with the support of veteran colleagues. Study groups, not unlike action research, provide a means for teacher learning that is meaningful to their immediate work with students.”^{ix}

Professional development is not the only key to a successful school. To achieve excellence, classroom observations are an integral part of improving instruction in order to increase student learning. As Glickman and colleagues (2005) noted, there are many ways to observe. “There are several performance indicator instruments. Performance indicator instruments allow one to record whether or not actions listed on the observation instrument have been observed” (Glickman, et al., 2005)^{xi}.

Wong (2004) states, “Induction is a process – that is organized by a school district to train, support, and retain new teachers and seamlessly progresses them into a lifelong learning program.”

Teacher Effectiveness: Needs Assessment

1. Has the school District of St. Croix defined what classroom instruction should look like and established effective evaluative procedures to measure this?
 - Due to the variety of teaching methods and the existence of teaching methods that are actually effective and research-driven, it can be said there are some expectations as to what classroom teaching and

learning should look like. However, these expectations must be clearly defined and communicated to ensure consistent instructional guidelines throughout the district. Consistency and standards are not yet at a point where all instructors teaching a certain content area at a certain grade level are aligned in their understanding of the techniques they should be using or the level and type of student engagement that should be elicited. Furthermore, small districts, especially those like the School District of St. Croix, face challenges similar to those faced by urban districts, such as the need to develop content area knowledge among instructors. Teachers in the School District of St. Croix must be provided with a greater level of resources to develop their expertise in both the subjects they teach and the instructional and interpersonal techniques necessary to teach those subjects. A truly concrete example of this lays in the difficulty that elementary school teachers exhibit in some (or sometimes all) of the subjects they teach. Lastly, a more targeted and consistent evaluation process is critical to demonstrate the district's efforts to ensure that its teachers meet or exceed the aforementioned standards of instructional delivery set forth by the district. Currently, inconsistent classroom observation and evaluation techniques are being applied across the district, resulting in a performance measurement process that is difficult to adjust to, for both the instructor and the individual performing the evaluation.

2. Does the district have a process in place to assess staffs' needs to base the planning of job-embedded professional development on student and instructor needs?

- While the latest best practice and research-driven techniques and methodologies are a great start to a quality Instructor Professional Development Program, such a program cannot be successful without the right mechanism of detecting and prescribing the types of Professional Development necessary. Additionally, the tracking, monitoring, and adjusting of Instructor Professional Development must be consistent, transparent, and systemic. Teacher seminars are not yet driven by teachers' needs and evaluator observations. During the strategic work sessions, leaders agreed that the lack of a bottom-up approach to Professional Development is hindering the efficacy of Professional Development. Once a needs-based system of professional development is established, it will then become necessary to develop a system, or utilize an already established professional development tool, to track, monitor, and prescribe professional development so that each instructor may have a repertoire of skills that is easily accessible to administrators in both the schools and districts. In order for teachers to develop the necessary skills to best instruct their students, they must be provided with guidance in the forms of both mentorship and content. A common current perception is that content area coaches have a development role that is neither consistent nor targeted. In order to maximize the effectiveness of this position, District Leaders and administrators must develop a clear set of roles and responsibilities and clearly delineate the reporting structure of content area coaches.

WORK PLAN #6: INITIATIVES

Initiative 6.1: Define Quality Instruction

Define what an effective instructor looks like in the School District of St. Croix utilizing current successful instruction and "The Framework for Teaching" by Charlotte Danielson.

Recommended Activities

1. The District Senior Leadership team should select the top three elementary, middle, and high school instructors based on student data to analyze the traits and characteristics that make these educators successful in their instructional roles.
2. The District Senior Leadership team should work with the VIDE and local administrative unions to leverage the successful characteristics of a teacher in STX determined above to revise the current job description. Include all necessary benchmarks for teachers at the elementary, middle, and high school levels to set a clear expectation for what a teacher in STX is accountable for in this new era of teaching and learning. These enhanced and more targeted job descriptions should also incorporate the Charlotte Danielson "Framework for Teaching Model" to ensure that all teachers are able to perform the following tasks consistently and with fidelity:

- Establish appropriate instructional goals and objectives.
 - Plan instruction and student evaluation based on an in-depth understanding of the content, student needs, curriculum standards, and the community.
 - Adapt instructional opportunities for diverse learners.
 - Demonstrate a deep understanding of the central concepts, assumptions, structures, and pedagogy of the content area.
 - Use research-based classroom strategies that are grounded in higher order thinking, problem-solving, and real-world connections for all students.
 - Use appropriate evaluation and assessments to determine student mastery of content and make instructional decisions.
 - Communicate student achievement and progress to students, their parents, and other appropriate stakeholders.
 - Reflect on teaching practice through careful examination of classroom evaluation and assessments.
 - Create a classroom culture that develops student intellectual capacity in the content area.
 - Manage classroom resources effectively.
 - Collaborate with colleagues and others as needed.
 - Engage in high-quality, ongoing professional development as defined by the Virgin Islands Board of Education Professional Development Policy to strengthen knowledge and skill in the content of the teaching assignment.
 - Perform professional responsibilities efficiently and effectively.
 - Communicate clearly and correctly with students, parents and other stakeholders.
3. The School District of St. Croix will conduct a Professional Learning Community dialogue that is driven by a book talk of “The Framework for Teaching” by Charlotte Danielson. This professional development session should facilitate open discussion about prospective challenges that instructors may have with implementing the model in the classroom and may be guided by an external partner or contractor that has implemented this model in other districts or schools.
 4. The School District of St. Croix will conduct a training session that includes participants observing a model lesson aligned to “The Framework for Teaching”. Once participants observe the model lesson, ideas should be discussed regarding the strengths of the lesson and the chronological implementation of the framework components to ensure the smoothest transition possible for administrators, teachers, and most of all, the students of St. Croix.
 5. The School District of St. Croix will collaborate with the local university to establish the new expectations of graduates with a degree in education so that district teachers have the specific skills needed to transform and sustain the education provided to the students of the School District of St. Croix.

Initiative 6.2: Teacher Effectiveness Evaluation Process

Develop an evaluation tool that utilizes methodologies and techniques aligned to national educational trends and is an effective method of guiding teacher development.

Recommended Activities

1. The School District of St. Croix will meet with the VIDE to review the state’s mandatory teacher evaluation system and/or process. Share concerns regarding specific criteria and timelines associated with conducting teacher

evaluations and understand the district's level of flexibility over their own evaluation process. If the district does not have flexibility, this activity is the conclusion of this initiative unless the state is willing to re-consider the island-wide evaluation or make a school performance-based exception for the School District of St. Croix.

Note: If the district DOES have flexibility in the development of Teacher Evaluations, implement the below activities:

2. The School District of St. Croix will use the roles and benchmarks established in Initiative 6 to create a Teacher Effectiveness Evaluation rubric for elementary, middle and high school teachers to ensure a consistent and high standard of teaching across the district.
3. The School District of St. Croix will identify the sources of evaluative data selected in Initiative 1.1, based on the benchmarks in Initiative 6, that will evaluate teacher performance but are not limited to classroom observations. Additional criteria, which should be identified and shared with teachers in advance, may include student performance data, student engagement in the classroom, teacher attendance data, lesson planning, student work, portfolios, professional development, and other measures of teacher performance and professionalism.

Note: Throughout the development of the new evaluation process, the current evaluation process and its corresponding timelines should be used until administrators and instructors district-wide are trained in the new process and notified that the transition has officially taken place.

4. The School District of St. Croix will release an RFP and select an external partner with proven experience in developing and implementing district-wide evaluation processes to ensure that the district's evaluation process is based on the latest research-driven best practices. This external partner should also collaborate with the district to ensure that the new evaluation process directly aligns to "The Framework for Teaching" by Charlotte Danielson.
5. District administrators and other individuals responsible for conducting performance evaluations should be afforded the opportunity to visit other school districts in which an effective evaluation process similar to the one being developed in the School District of St. Croix has already been developed and implemented.
6. The School District of St. Croix will schedule and implement evaluation training for all individuals (i.e. principals and content area coaches) in the district that will be conducting evaluations to ensure all evaluations are done consistently across the district and with fidelity. Components of the training may include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - A group discussion of the new evaluation system, specifically the ways in which the new system is an improvement of the previous one.
 - An administrator or external partner that is assisting with the development of the evaluation process should model the way in which the new evaluation observation process takes place.
 - An administrator or external partner that is assisting with the development of the evaluation process should model how to conduct a meeting with a teacher that focuses on setting the expectations of the new evaluation process.
 - Each training session participant should perform a practice evaluation in a hypothetical or training simulation to display his or her mastery of the new evaluation process and identify challenges.

Note: Until the new evaluation process has been finalized and all instructors and evaluators have been trained, a pilot of this new system should be launched at no more than 4-5 schools to troubleshoot any potential implementation challenges before district-wide implementation. The 4-5 schools may be selected on a voluntary basis or may be chosen by the Senior District Leadership Team based on the effectiveness of their use of the current evaluation system.

7. District Leadership should collaborate with the VIDE to understand the capacity that school and district leadership will have in removing or taking action with regards to incompetent teachers as indicated by the new evaluation process. This is a critical step and must happen before supervisors set expectations with the instructors that they will be evaluating.
8. Individuals that will be performing instructor evaluations should meet with their assigned teachers to discuss how the instructors will be evaluated to set clear performance expectations and accountability levels for the teachers as they relate to the new evaluation process.

9. The School District of St. Croix will develop and disseminate an Annual Classroom Observation Calendar/Schedule. The schedule should reflect which teachers will be observed and by whom, as well as a schedule for pre/post observation conferences.
10. The School District of St. Croix will review the current evaluative documentation available on each teacher to establish a baseline understanding of instructors in the district so that the individuals performing the evaluation start with as much of an understanding of the instructor as possible.
11. District leaders should meet with the individuals conducting observations to stay apprised of any issues and/or concerns regarding teacher performance – these meetings should be preceded and followed by observations of evaluations when necessary to ensure that instructional improvement is taking place.
12. The School District of St. Croix will establish a process to recognize and highlight teacher effectiveness and success in the classroom. Written notes and letters of commendation should be provided to teachers that go above and beyond the call of duty and demonstrate exceptional performance in the classroom.

Initiative 6.3: “Master Classrooms”

Institute “Master Classrooms,” in which expertly qualified instructors model highly effective classroom techniques as training for other instructors within the district.

Recommended Activities

1. The School District of St. Croix will define district-wide standards for what a model classroom looks like in the areas of Reading, Math, Science and Social Studies using the benchmarks established in Initiative 6. These standards should be distributed to each principal district-wide.
2. The School District of St. Croix will work with VIDE and the labor unions to develop incentives or annual stipends for “Master Teachers” that allow their classrooms to become instructional development laboratories.
3. The School District of St. Croix will direct principals to assess each classroom within their school to discern which teacher classrooms qualify as “Master Classrooms”.
4. The School District of St. Croix will establish school visits by district administrators to visit the principal-appointed “Master Classrooms” to ensure that each of these classrooms typify model classroom and optimal teaching and learning characteristics.
5. The School District of St. Croix will develop consistent logistical and implementation criteria for “Master Classrooms”. These criteria should guide administrators and teachers as to how to setup and operate a Master Classroom, including requirements such as, but not limited to, the following:
 - A clear and consistent protocol for setting up Master Classroom visits for both school principals and the Master Classroom Teachers.
 - Classrooms should be organized in a manner that allows three to five chairs for teacher learners to observe the lesson.
6. The School District of St. Croix will develop and implement training for all teachers that have been selected to host “Master Classrooms”. The training should be aligned with the Professional Development Standards established by the National Staff Development Council. It should include:
 - Discussion and modeling of the components and standards of the new evaluation process established in Initiative 6.2 and based on the standards developed in Initiative 6.1.
 - A modeling session in which an expert instructor models a “Master Classroom” and then leads a discussion in which training participants share their observations and predict their own successes and challenges with the program.

7. The School District of St. Croix will send a district-wide list of “Master Classrooms” that is categorized by grade level and subject.
8. The School District of St. Croix will develop a plan in which substitutes or temporary aides are arranged to lead classrooms while teachers visit “Master Classrooms” to understand and observe an effective classroom environment and the use of specific instructional strategies. This plan should be ready for when “Master Classrooms” are implemented.
9. The School District of St. Croix will initiate Lesson Study Groups to serve as forums for best practice and instructional improvement discussions among teacher learners that visit “Master Classrooms”. Just as with Professional Learning Communities (a similar concept), these Lesson Study Groups should be guided by an experienced administrator or proven external partner for the first few sessions to model successful professional learning techniques and set the standards, expectations, and intended outcomes for each Lesson Study Group.
10. The School District of St. Croix will host another professional development session for all “Master Classroom” instructors to remediate any protocol or techniques forgotten over the summer and to give instructors one last chance to practice before implementation of the program.
11. The School District of St. Croix will commence the “Master Classroom” program and ensure that the plan developed in Activity 8 of this Initiative is used to facilitate the use of substitute teachers while classroom instructors observe the district’s “Master Classrooms.”

Initiative 6.4: Elementary School Departmentalization

Conduct a feasibility study on departmentalizing elementary schools to improve the quality of instruction in all subject areas.

Recommended Activities

1. The School District of St. Croix will conduct an in-depth analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the district’s elementary school teachers to determine which content area that each teacher is best suited to instruct.
2. The School District of St. Croix will determine the amount of support and professional development necessary to departmentalize elementary schools according to the core subject areas and capitalize on each teacher’s current knowledge base.
3. District Senior Leadership should develop guidelines and protocols for departmentalized elementary schools, including but not limited to:
 - Schedules for schools that have departmentalized classrooms
 - Variance in accountability for elementary teachers that instruct within departmentalized classrooms that are more content area specific
 - Protocols for elementary students transitioning from class to class
4. Senior District Leadership and District Department/Content Area Chairs should conduct training for all elementary Principals and Assistant Principals on the guidelines for departmentalized elementary schools established in the previous step.
5. The School District of St. Croix will select one pilot elementary school to implement the departmentalized schedule to troubleshoot any major challenges before district-wide implementation.
6. The School District of St. Croix will develop a plan to transition all elementary schools to create effective, content area based classrooms with a staggered re-deployment strategy that prioritizes reading and math (based on the challenges observed in the pilot program mentioned in the previous step).
7. Senior District Leadership and District Department/Content Area Chairs should conduct training for all elementary Principals and Assistant Principals to discuss and analyze the challenges and success of the pilot departmentalized school as they prepare for program implementations in their own schools.

8. The School District of St. Croix will implement departmentalized elementary schools district-wide.

Initiative 6.5: Coaching Program Re-Design

Restructure Coaching Program to provide qualified teacher coaches with consistent structure and defined responsibilities to develop the next generation of effective teachers.

Recommended Activities

1. The School District of St. Croix will work with VIDE and the local union to establish a “career ladder” program for master teachers that includes a ‘coach’ position for extra compensation for the additional duty. This position would allow for master teachers in coaching positions to support and lead the development of new career teachers and current teachers who are struggling to improve student achievement. A rigorous application and interview process should be implemented to ensure the selection of the best possible candidates.
2. The School District of St. Croix will explore the feasibility of implementing a program dedicated to assisting teachers in becoming certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards as a route to becoming a Master Teacher. Implement, if possible.
3. The School District of St. Croix will work with district stakeholders to create a job description for the coach position aligned to the duties needed to provide the necessary support to positively impact teacher performance. The job description should support the classroom environment checklist developed in Activity 5.4.2 and should contain, but not be limited to, the following requirements:
 - Coach Smith, Mathematics Coach for schools X, Y, and Z, will report to [supervisor] and will utilize the Coaching Continuum (Observe, Model, Co-Teach, Observe) to develop [list of teachers].
 - Coach Smith will be evaluated by [supervisor].
 - Coach Smith has the following academic targets: (this would include learning gains for specific groups of students as measured by standardized assessments in the specific content area).
4. The School District of St. Croix will establish specific timelines for coaching roles and responsibilities to maximize each coach’s impact on student achievement:
 - August – December: Coaches should work with teachers to improve teacher effectiveness and build district’s instructional capacity.
 - January – March: Coaches should work with district and school leaders to tailor instruction based on specific student data to maximize positive test results via targeted pull out and push in sessions with Master Teachers.
5. The School District of St. Croix will establish criteria that identify teachers who consistently demonstrate excellence. This should be based on clear evidence tied to significant gains in student achievement and the demonstrated ability to perform according to the standards established in Initiative 6.
6. The School District of St. Croix will select content area coaches for the entire district using the criteria established in the previous activity.
7. Each coach should have a meeting scheduled with his or her direct supervisor to set expectations for the year regarding targeted improvements for each of the coach’s teachers. This meeting should also address support the coach may need to ensure that he or she is provided with the resources to accomplish the goals for which he or she is now held accountable.
8. The School District of St. Croix will work with principals and district administrators to facilitate the continuous and effective use of collaborative planning within and across content areas so that coaches may drive instructional

consistency and efficacy to a unified and targeted audience.

9. The School District of St. Croix will schedule a meeting with each coach and his or her direct supervisor to ensure that the expectations are being met in terms of each instructor's progress and the actions being taken by the coach to support that progress.
10. The School District of St. Croix will schedule a meeting with each coach and his or her direct supervisor to review the accomplishments and challenges of the year as compared to the expectations set forth in Activity 7 within this Initiative.

Initiative 6.6: Professional Development Implementation and Tracking
Collaborate with an external partner to offer the latest in research-driven instructor professional development and a tool to track the delivery thereof.

Recommended Activities

1. The School District of St. Croix will release an RFP for a vendor or vendors that are able to provide professional development to instructors that will build capacity in the standards and skills outlined in Initiative 6.1. A key component of the services provided by the external partner should be a tracking tool or system that allows district and school leadership personnel to access a person's history of professional development and prescribe additional professional development accordingly.

Note: If possible, the vendor that will deliver professional development for instructors should be one and the same as the vendor that provides services outlined in Initiative 5.2 – leadership development. A vendor that can provide both leadership and instructional professional development will ensure a more consistent and unified district capacity development effort.

2. The School District of St. Croix will invite three to five RFP finalists for a demonstration of the type of professional development each would provide to ensure that it is aligned with National Staff Development Council standards and is research-driven. The vendor(s) selected should be able to readily suggest modules and trainings that are aligned to Initiative 6.1 and should have educator practitioners that utilize the latest professional development techniques (i.e., the Coaching Continuum, Professional Learning Communities, virtual learning, etc.).
3. The School District of St. Croix will collaborate with the selected vendor(s) to develop a professional development menu that aligns to Initiative 6.1 and prioritizes professional development modules for each instructor type (i.e., 6th grade math) based on the evaluation criteria set forth in Initiative 6.2.
4. District and school administrators should collaborate on a professional development plan for each instructor to establish a clear timeline of which professional development modules the instructor will complete and when they will be completed, in a manner that ensures the mastery of foundational technique and progress in each instructor's capacity according to his or her baseline evaluation performed in Activity 6.2.10.
5. The external partner should develop and implement a professional development tracking tool that will be able to accomplish the following:
 - Track and evaluate whether the teachers are building capacity in their ability to perform according to the district and school established standards developed in Initiative 6.1.
 - Allow district and school leaders, as well as content area coaches, to quickly access outstanding development for a teacher and analyze that teacher's current progress regarding professional development sessions already attended.
 - Provide points for multiple individuals that are responsible for the development of a teacher's a capacity (i.e. the school principal and that teacher's specific content area coach). Multiple user inputs will allow for the most comprehensive and detailed understanding of an instructor's development cycle.
6. All district and school leaders should receive training on the above-established tool to ensure that it used with fidelity. A manual to the tool should be provided to all users of the system.

7. The School District of St. Croix will commence professional development modules for all instructors in the district and track each instructor's progress using the tracking tool from the previous activity.

Note: While the new professional development menu and tracking tool are being developed, it is critical that previously planned professional developed activities continue to be implemented to ensure that any momentum of instructional capacity development within the district is not interrupted.

Work Plan 7: Student Engagement

Work Plan #7:

Transform students into independent and engaged learners where every child becomes his or her own classroom.

The term "student engagement" has been used to depict students' willingness to participate in routine school activities, such as attending classes, submitting required work, and following teachers' directions in class. That includes participating in the activities offered as part of the school program and student participation in school reform activities (Chapman, 2003)^{xii}.

Recent federal and state legislation created expectations has created explicit expectations for student performance and consequences for schools, teachers, and students that fail to meet expectations. These policy changes have raised the bar for students and educators in America's public schools. Student performance is often linked to student engagement within any school setting. Engaged students are more likely to perform well academically (Klem, 2004)^{xiii}.

The School District of St. Croix will utilize a holistic approach to improving student engagement within the school and the classroom by implementing a variety of effective strategies with school administration as well as the teachers in the classroom. Many variables factor into a student becoming "engaged" and then being able to maintain that engagement. One variable is relationship building; we will facilitate the strengthening of relationships between the students, staff, and parents. Another variable is classroom instruction; we will work to improve instructional delivery strategies of the teachers on a daily basis. Creating PLC's will be a key piece in improving curriculum, ensuring a standards-based delivery of instruction, and using data to drive instruction. Our team will enhance teacher understanding and the use of strategies designed to increase student engagement time by providing high-quality professional development concentrated on features of effective instruction, instructional management, and classroom management. We will then take the strategies delivered in the professional development and model them for the teachers and administration. Our team will support in the process from start to finish as research indicates that teacher support is crucial in creating student engagement in and out of the classroom (Klem, 2003)^{xiv}. We will facilitate the development of a curriculum that is relevant and student centered to assist with this engagement process.

Studies have shown engaged students are more likely to perform well academically. A key element to engaging students in the classroom is for teachers to have a large inventory of instructional strategies to engage a variety of students (Garcia-Reid et al., 2005) Engagement can be consistent when instruction is rigorous, aligned to the academic standards, and uses instructional strategies that meets the needs of all students.

When a nurturing, well-structured, learning environment is facilitated with expectations that are clearly understood and fair students are more likely to report engagement in schools. Students, who are engaged are associated with higher attendance and test scores as well. Student engagement and performance strongly predict whether youth will complete school, graduate, and pursue a college education, and ultimately become economically self-sufficient (Klem, 2004).

Parental support is directly linked to student engagement in learning especially among African-American and Latino youth (Garcia-Reid et al, 2005)^{xv}. Therefore it is crucial for schools to break down any obstacles that impede parental involvement and be steadfast to increase parental interaction at school and with their children's schoolwork (Garcia-Reid et al., 2005). By fostering a welcoming environment schools can increase parental support and provide opportunities for parents to collaboratively work with the teachers and administration to assist in identifying needs and increase communications (Garcia-Reid et al., 2005).

Student Engagement: Needs Assessment

1. General Student Challenges

- One of the greatest challenges confronting today's teachers is how to align the instructional techniques in the classroom with the fast evolving student behaviors and learning styles that are a result of the major impact of technology. District statistics such as the high number of students retained for two years in a row or low literacy rates across are not a result of low student capacity, but rather an indicator that the instruction being delivered in the classroom does not suffice. Along with the elimination of dispassionate instruction and apathy towards our children's success, technical measures are not being fully utilized to engage the 21st century students. Technology and communication have attributed to a student learning style that has become low on patience, and high on curiosity. Teachers must be trained and inspired to utilize software to help students pace their own learning while still supporting and challenging them at the same time. A student's ability to manipulate a cell phone or find a fact on the Internet within seconds must be leveraged in both interest and ability. Once students are engaged and their needs catered to, a sense of confidence begins to build – only then can a student understand that he or she is being active, and is at the very center of the instructional process.

WORK PLAN #7: INITIATIVES

Initiative 7.1: Develop a Benchmark for Academic Student Engagement

What does an engaged student look like and how do we measure this as a district and as a school. What are the specific metrics of that measurement? The first step to whole-school improvement in the area of student engagement is for the entire building faculty to share a definition of student engagement.

Recommended Activities:

1. The District Leadership Team, in collaboration with each school site principal and his or her assistant principals, should develop and implement a student survey to determine the student perspective as to what the ideal, 21st century student should look like as defined by specific characteristics. This survey should be administered for grades 3 and up and should differentiate based on the student grade level. Some concepts and questions that may be included in the survey are the following:
 - What competencies do you think you should improve in most during this school year?
 - What competencies do you think you should be fluent in by the time you graduate elementary/middle/high school?
 - What components of classroom instruction that you are receiving are you fulfilled with and you think will benefit your future?
 - What components do you believe you are missing in the classroom that can help you in preparation for a career or college?
 - What characteristics do you think make a "good teacher?"
 - What are some of the activities that you do in class that you find interesting and that you learn from?

2. The District Leadership Team, in collaboration with each school site principal and his or her assistant principals, should develop and implement a parent survey to determine the parent perspective as to what the ideal, 21st century student should look like as defined by specific characteristics. This survey should be administered for all grades and should differentiate based on the student grade level. The concepts and questions from the parent survey should match those of the student survey but written for the parental perspective.
3. The District Leadership Team, in collaboration with each school site principal and his or her assistant principals, should develop and implement an “Other Stakeholders” survey to determine the perspective of businesses and other local organizations that may employ students, as to what the ideal, 21st century student should look like as defined by specific characteristics. This survey should be administered across the island to get the most comprehensive and all-inclusive perspective available. Some concepts and questions that may be included in the survey are the following:
 - What are the skills and technical competencies that a young professional or graduating high school student would need to be successful within your organization?
 - What skills do you find employees that graduated from the School District of St. Croix have mastered and apply well within your organization?
 - What skills do you find employees that graduated from the School District of St. Croix struggle with and thus fall behind in their work within your organization?
 - What are the behavioral patterns within graduates from the School District of St. Croix and how do they help and/or hinder these individuals from succeeding within your organization?
4. The District Leadership Team, in collaboration with each school site principal and his or her assistant principals, should analyze the three aforementioned surveys to determine what the “ideal student” looks like from a student, parent, and business/community stakeholder perspective. Most importantly, common threads of student characteristics should be outlined and discussed for inclusion in the “ideal student profile” to be further described below.
5. The District Leadership Team and all those involved with defining this “ideal student profile” should conduct a book-talk based meeting that will provide district and school personnel fresh and research-based insight as to the “look fors” for current and ideal student characteristics.
 - Book Recommendation: *Do You Know Enough About Me To Teach Me?* By Stephen Peters, is a great book to provide an accurate perspective of today’s youth and how to best engage them.
6. The District Leadership Team, in collaboration with each school site principal and his or her assistant principals, should analyze all current measures of student academic, attendance, and behavior performance data to determine what an average student looks like now, and what an engaged student will look like upon completion of the implementation of this strategic plan.
 - In order to effectively baseline (understand the starting point) and benchmark (understand the end goal) for student academic performance, academic goals should be separated into student grouping based on elementary students, middle school students, and high school students.
 - All measures of academic progress should be utilized to measure each student’s current performance including but not limited to:
 - Grade Point Average
 - Statewide assessments
 - Nationwide assessments including but not limited to SAT, ACT, NAEP

- o All measures of behavior and attendance data should be incorporated into measuring current “average student” performance:
 - Suspension Data
 - Attendance Data
 - Teacher observations
- 7. In order to have an objective measurement of student academic progress, it may be necessary to implement a vendor provided baseline assessment should be utilized that captures both VIDE and the pending Common Core Standards for academic achievement.
- 8. A student profile should be developed to capture the key metrics described above for the “average” student so that school and district personnel may better understand where students are today as grouped based on primary, middle, and high school levels.
- 9. The District Leadership Team, in collaboration with school-site administrators, should develop a list of research-based characteristics that describe the 21st century student and the skills that he or she needs have to enter college or today’s global competitive workforce. These skills may include but not be limited to:
 - As with “On the job training” – students must be able to learn by doing through structured classroom activities.
 - Students should be able to collaborate with both their peers and superiors as they work towards completing work or classroom assignments.
 - Students must have the ability to use multiple sources, including journals and newspapers, technology, and communication with subject matter/real life experts, to find and gather the information they need.
- 10. Once the “average” student profile is developed, the District Leadership Team should conduct three separate meetings, one with principals from primary, middle, and high school levels, to create an “ideal student profile” through the following:
 - Set reasonable goals as to expectations for the “ideal student’s” academic and behavioral performance upon the completion of the implementation of the strategic plan. These goals should take into account state-mandated guidelines, federal legislation, the eSIP, this strategic plan, and the survey results analyzed in the steps above.
 - Incorporate the 21st century characteristics of a student developed and outlined in Step 9 above.
 - Develop a set of chronological goals (i.e. by quarter and by year) that will measure anticipated improvement in student performance from the commencement to the completion of the implementation of the strategic plan. These goals will serve as indicators of success if accomplished, or indicators of necessary improvement if the goals are not accomplished and more aggressive initiatives need to be planned at that time.
 - Develop a crosswalk between the academic and behavior attributes of the “ideal student” and the seven work plans of this strategic plan to ensure that the two align.
- 11. Once the “ideal student” profile is developed, the District Leadership Team should collaborate with the Strategic Communication Committee to use the methods and communication protocols described in Work Plan #4 to communicate throughout the district and each school the idea of the “ideal student” and that each student in St. Croix can achieve this through the world-class education he or she receives in the classroom.

Initiative 7.2: Tailoring to the 21st Century Learner

Create a 21st century learning environment of inspiration and creativity to engage the 21st century learners in a way that caters to their interests and not only engages them to learn, but engages them on learning how to learn.

Recommended Activities:

1. The District Leadership Team, in collaboration with school site principals should conduct an assessment of each school building and the classrooms within to ensure that the building and equipment have the capacity to support a 21st century classrooms. Specifications for a 21st century classroom include but are not limited to:
 - Wireless internet for mobile laptops
 - A sufficient amount of electricity outlets to support the hardware necessary for that particular classroom
 - Classrooms should be clean and organized to allow students to focus
2. The District Leadership Team, in collaboration with school site administrators and curriculum personnel, should perform an analysis of all current software-based curriculum and electronic/digital student engagement products to assess those that are effective and determine the common components among these products that works well for the students of the School District of St. Croix:
 - Effective electronic/digital media products should reflect a pattern in increased student assessment scores for those students that use the products as opposed to students that don't.
 - Products should not be measured on scores alone but also on the level of increased engagement from the students that use them as reflected by increased student participation and effort in the classroom.
3. The District Leadership Team, in collaboration with school site administrators, should use the data collection methods outlined in Initiative 1.1 of this Strategic Plan to determine the most critical gaps in student competencies (i.e. specific content areas and standards) that are not currently addressed by the electronic student engagement and curriculum products outlined in Step 2 above.
4. The District Leadership Team, in collaboration with school site administrators, should release one or several RFPs to solicit vendor bids and proposals with regards to electronic/digital media curriculum products that may address the critical gaps outlined in Step 3 above. The proposal should include but not be limited to user licenses, implementation, and training for teachers and administrators.
 - A major component of the electronic/digital media curriculum products should be the ability of the product to simultaneously assess student mastery in the topic instructed. Products should be adaptive in a way that responds to the student's struggles or accomplishments within a particular lesson or standard.
5. The District Leadership Team should develop and implement a training for teachers and school-site administrators on the characteristics of a 21st century learner outlined in Step 9 of Initiative 7.1. An RFP may need to be released for a vendor that can provide Professional Development that teaches instructors, at minimum, the following skills and competencies:
 - Becoming facilitators of learning through the use of prescribed activities instead of "stand and deliver" lecturing.
 - Engaging students with all the resources available in the classroom and beyond including but not limited to the Internet, software newspapers, etc...
 - Allowing students to collaborate on projects and tasks through facilitating teamwork and discussion.
 - Supporting students in becoming independent, critical, and curious thinkers through strategic projects and specially designed activities. These activities should be modeled during the training.
 - Communicating with parents and students outside of the classroom through the use of technology and media such as Facebook and email.

Initiative 7.3: Engaging Learners Outside of the Classroom

Develop and implement a set of structured and interest-based activities outside of the classroom that will motivate and inspire students to engage on a greater level within the classroom.

Recommended Activities:

1. The school-site principal, in collaboration with his or her leadership team, should establish a student council to engage high-performing and social students and work with these children to create a trickle effect of children that inspire other children to perform better. Research shows that students that have ownership of their education perform much better as a result of their engagement in civic and service-oriented activities^{xvi}.
 - A meeting should be conducted by the Superintendent and his leadership team with all school-site administrators to discuss current student government groups and the challenges and successes that are taking place within this school group.
 - The participants in the meeting described above should collectively select one of the school's student government groups as the model group for the rest of the district to replicate. The components that should be replicated include but should not be limited to the voting process, promotional efforts to advertise student government and engage students, activities that the group is involved in, and the level and style of adult involvement in this group.
2. The District Leadership Team, in collaboration with school-site administrators and parent groups should institute a school requirement that makes it mandatory for each middle and high school student to participate in an extracurricular activity that is part of an approved list. A plethora of research indicates that students involved in extracurricular activities perform better with regards to both behavior and academics^{xvii}.
 - A meeting should be conducted by the Superintendent and his leadership team with all school-site administrators to discuss each school's current repertoire of extra-curricular activities and ensure that the district has enough capacity to accommodate at least one activity per student.
 - The participants in the above-described meeting should discuss and decide upon each school's strength in extra-curricular activities. This discussion should lead to a potential division of activities in which schools that excel in one type of activity (i.e. robotics club) can enroll students from other schools and create a "division of labor" and optimize each program for the sake of the students and capitalize on strengths and accomplishments already established.
 - Once the comprehensive district list of extra-curricular activities is established, promotional materials should be developed in accordance with the communication plan established in Work Plan #4 to notify students of both the enhanced programs that will be available, and the pending requirement that each student must enroll in at least one extra-curricular activity.
 - Plan and implement two "activity fairs" at one or multiple locations to highlight the extra-curricular activities available within the district and entice and inform students about these activities. This should take place two months before the establishment of the requirement that activities are mandatory.
3. The District Leadership Team, in collaboration with school-site administrators and district and school-based athletic coordinators should pass a requirements that mandates that all students involved in school-based athletics must maintain a certain minimum GPA and can have no more than a certain number of behavior and attendance-related problems.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ⁱ"Turning Around the Nation's Worst Schools." *Massinsight.org*. Mass Insight Education & Research Institute, 11 Mar. 2008. Web. 22 Aug. 2011. <www.massinsight.org/publications/turnaround/54/file/1/pubs/2010/04/15/Turning_Around_the_Nations_Worst_Schools_03.11.08.pdf>.
- ⁱⁱThe Regional Education Laboratory for the Southeast (SERVE). Making the Most of Out-of-School Time Through Expanded Learning Opportunities. *The Vision Magazine*, Volume 3, Number 1. (2004).
- ⁱⁱⁱHuang, D., Kim, K. S., Marshall, A., & Pérez, P. (2005). Keeping kids in school: An LA's BEST example. University of California, Los Angeles, National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing.
- ^{iv}Expanding Learning Opportunities: It Takes More than Time: Issue Brief #29. The document may be retrieved from www.afterschoolalliance.org/issue_briefs/issue_expand_learn.doc.
- ^vDonaldson, Gordon, Harvard Review contributor, Educator, Professor, Educational Leadership 2009
- ^{vi}Budge, Kathleen, Assistant Professor, Curriculum and Instruction, Boise State University, Idaho, 2009. Parret, William, ASCD Faculty, Director of the Center for School Improvement & Policy Studies, Professor of Education, Boise State University, Idaho. 2009.
- ^{vii}Hess, Frederick, Educator, Political Scientist and author resident scholar and director of Educational Policy of the American Enterprise Institute. Contributed to the No Child Left Behind first publication, Tough Love for Schools and Common Sense School Reform. 2008.
- ^{viii}Fullan, M.G. (1990). Staff development, innovation and institutional development. In B. Joyce (Ed.), *Changing school culture through staff development* (p. 3 -25). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- ^{ix}Wong, H.K. (2004). Induction programs that keep new teachers teaching and improving. *NASSP Bulletin*, 88(638), 41-58.
- ^xU.S. Department of Education, Memorandum by Duncan, A., U.S. Secretary of Education. Watkins, P. (2005). The principal's role in attracting, and developing new teachers: Three strategies for collaboration and support. *The Clearing House*, 79(2), 83-87.
- ^{xi}Glickman, C.D., Gordon, S.P., & Ross-Gordon, J.M. (2005). *The basic guide to supervision and instructional leadership*. Boston: Pearson.
- ^{xii}Chapman, E. (2003) "Assessing student engagement rates," ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation.
- ^{xiii}Klem, AM (2004) *The Journal of school health*, Vol. 74, No. 7. (September 2004), pp. 262-273.
- ^{xiv}Klem AM, Levin L, Bloom S, Connell JP. *First Things First's Family Advocate System: Building Relationships to Support Student Success in Secondary Schools*. Philadelphia, Pa: Institute for Research and Reform in Education; 2003.
- ^{xv}Garcia-Reid, P., Reid, R., & Peterson, N. A. (2005, May). School engagement among Latino youth in an urban middle school context: Valuing the role of social support. *Education and Urban Society*, 37(3), 257-275.
- ^{xvi}"Impacts of Service-Learning on Participating K-12 Students | National Service-Learning Clearinghouse." National Service-Learning Clearinghouse | America's Most Comprehensive Service-Learning Resource. N.p., n.d. Web. 8 Nov. 2011. <http://www.servicelearning.org/instant_info/fact_sheets/k-12_facts/impacts>.
- ^{xvii}Wang, Jing, and Jonathan Shiveley. "The Impact of Extracurricular Activity on Student Academic Performance." Sacramento State University. Sacramento State, n.d. Web. 29 Oct. 2011. <<http://www.csus.edu/oir/Assessment/Nonacademic%20Program%20Assessment/Student%20Activities/Student%20Activity%20Report%202009.pdf>>



6625 Miami Lakes Dr. • Suite 376
Miami Lakes, FL 33014
(305) 200-8088 . phone
(305) 402-2626 . fax

www.academiceducationalpartners.org
info@academiceducationalpartners.org