

RSO

Reggie Smith Organizing Society

Organizing Around Instructional Issues

July 19-21, 2017

University of Richmond

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In this workshop we will:

- Discuss the importance of organizing
- Explore issue organizing
- Review instructional issues
- Develop organizing plans to address instructional issues
- Strategize how to continue organizing work on the local level

Norms and Expectations for Training

Malcolm Knowles, *Optimal Learning Climate*(1984)

Mutual Respect



Active Inquiry



Support



Collaboration



Mutual Trust



Openness



Who's in the Room?

Introduce yourself! Give your name, local and share a problem or an instructional issue that you would like to see addressed by your local.



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What is Organizing?

- Organizing is mobilizing members to exercise their collective power to achieve mutual goals and protect collective self interests.
- It is about bringing about a change that will benefit an organization
- Requires a deliberate decision to challenge power/practice with collective action.

Benefits of Organizing

- Coalition building
- Improved working conditions
- Tool for addressing everyday problems
- Personal discovery and growth
- Individuals develop and use skills and abilities

“The achievements of an organization are the results of combined effort of each individual.”

Vince Lombardi



Issue Organizing

Issue organizing is a strategy that identifies, validates and clearly frames or states the issue by which the members will be motivated.

Problems are long-term conditions that give rise to issues. We are concerned about problems. We address issues by organizing.

Examples:

Problem- Poor attendance at school events such as PTA meeting.

Issue- Parent engagement

Problems- lack of mentoring and support for novice educators,
educator retention

Issue-Educator retention and teacher shortage



In a balanced organization, working towards a common objective, there is success.

Arthur Helps

Validating Issues to Address

A **yes** answer to these questions **validates an issue**.

- Is it immediate or close at hand?
- Is it specific, real and concrete?
- Is there disagreement?
- Is the goal attainable? Is the issue winnable?

Frame The Issue

- Personalize the issue. Who are the people you want to target to influence?
- Delineate the sides (us and them). Determine what each side has to gain or lose.
- Don't divide your membership. Must be united!
- Develop an organizing plan

Shifting our Focus

One of VEA's strategic goals is to move from a service model to an organizing model. Organizing = Empowerment

Strong organizers build strong locals.

Strong locals build a strong association.

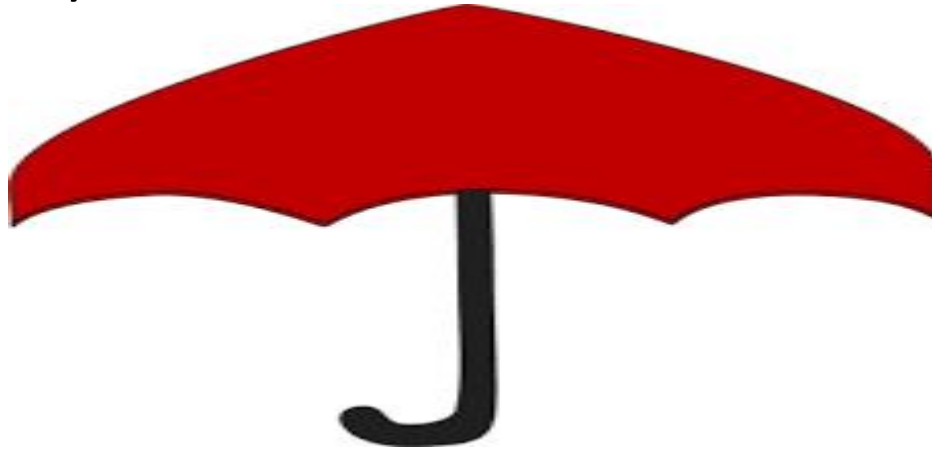
A strong association is able to have great impact on public education.

Let's hear from organizers in the room!!!

Share your success stories for organizing campaigns.

State Accountability Model (Comprehensive Plan)

All instructional issues fall under the umbrella of the state accountability model which has four main components:



Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Standards of Quality

Standards of Accreditation

Profile of a Virginia Graduate

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

ESSA is the reauthorization of The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965

Cornerstone of American Education

Replaces No Child Left Behind

Will help ensure that all students have the resources and support they need regardless of zip code

Multiple measures of student growth will be used

Better definition of student success

Brings most policymaking back under state and local control

More control by educators

Committee of Practitioners is part of decision-making at all levels



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Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Resources

VEA Toolkit www.veanea.org/ESSA

NEA Resources www.getessaright.org

www.nea.org/essabegins

NEA Great Public Schools Indicators Framework

U.S. ED Resources www.ed.gov/essa

VEA ESSA Implementation Team

Your local ESSA Implementation Team (if you don't have one, form one)

Standards of Quality

SOQs are the state Standards of Quality and how each locality receives funding from the General Assembly.

VDOE SOQs Recommendations include:

A specified ratio for school counselors to students

Nurses and Social Worker ratio

Assistant principals for elementary schools

Define the role of Education Support personnel such as para educators

Remove cap on Support Personnel

Integrated School Psychological Services

Class sizes restrictions

Insure data is collected to account for local deployment of SOQ positions.

This may tie into the potential ESSA Dashboard Indicators of School Quality

VEA Offices Government Relations is primary contact for SOQ.

Standards of Accreditation

Virginia Board of Education Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia are designed to ensure that an effective educational program is established and maintained in Virginia's public schools. The accreditation standards:

- Provide an essential foundation of educational programs of high quality in all schools for all students.
- Encourage continuous appraisal and improvement of the school program for the purpose of raising student achievement.
- Foster public confidence.
- Assure recognition of Virginia's public schools by other institutions of learning.
- Establish a means of determining the effectiveness of schools.
- VDOE is working to align changes to the SOAs with the state ESSA plan.
- There is a push in place to focus on career and college opportunities. May include other “dashboard indicators” to measure opportunities and achievements for Virginia's students

Standards of Accreditation

There are 8 sections to the SOAs.

Part I Provides definitions of terms

Including Planning Time

Staffing Positions

Part II VDOE Board philosophies

Part II Student Achievement Expectations

Part IV Instructional Programs

in Elementary, Middle and High School

Part V Defines roles of principals and professional staff and staffing requirements for support staff

Part VI School Safety

Part VII School Communication

Part VIII Provides bases for school corrective action

Profile of a Virginia Graduate (High School Redesign)

What does it mean to ready for life after high school? How does a graduate demonstrate productive workplace skills, exhibit responsible and responsive citizenship and align knowledge with career opportunities. The “Profile” and changes in curriculum will begin in 2018. The first graduating class under the redesign will be the Class of 2022.

What curriculum areas and skills are being considered?

The 5C’s (Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, Collaboration, Communication, and Citizenship) will guide the development of the Profile.

Skill development spans four major areas:

- 1) Content Knowledge
- 2) Workplace Skills
- 3) Community Engagement and Civic Responsibility, and
- 4) Career Exploration

Instruction in the core areas covered by Standards of Learning will continue. These include English, math, science, history/social sciences, the arts, health and personal wellness, languages, and career and technical education. Graduates should be able to demonstrate a strong work ethic, professionalism and personal responsibility, as well as good citizenship.

Interest and skill assessment, as well as development will occur throughout each student's K-12 experience. Career goals and pathways will be explored throughout matriculation. One goal is to increase internships/work-based learning experiences, career exposure, exploration, and planning. The redesign will most likely include expanding authentic performance assessments and reducing the number of credits verified by SOL tests.

December 1, 2017 Final regulations completed

Fall 2018 New graduation requirements applicable to first-time freshmen

Organizing Plan Template

- Why organize?
- What are the problems we are experiencing?
- What is the issue stemming from the problems?
- What do we want to happen? (Goals and Objectives)
- Who do we need to target?
- How do we want to influence our target?
- What strategies will we use? (actions)
- What resources do we have? Need? How will we get them?
- What is our timeline?
- How will we evaluate?

Sharing

Let's take some time to share the issues and tentative organizing plans that you have begun to develop.

Tell why you have chosen this topic and what your intended outcome is as a result of organizing around this particular issue.

VEA TOP Grant

The VEA TOP Grant is funding for a **Targeted Organizing Project** which engages locals, multi-local UniServ Councils, SVEA and VEA-R in complimenting current local funding in support of organizing campaigns and activities that ultimately help locals attract, recruit and retain members and create powerful local associations through the building of organizing culture and capacity.

Examples of TOP Grants for addressing instructional issues include:

Large local- “Grade ins” at School Board meetings. Organized teachers to show officials just how much work is done after work hours. Successfully won planning time and class size reduction. Funds purchased supplies and literature to increase visibility and voice.

Small local- Needed professional development of all educators (including non-members). Used funds to host VEA workshop to highlight training opportunities and benefits of being a VEA member. Increased membership and capacity while addressing instructional need.

For more information on the VEA TOP Grant,
contact VEA Executive Director
Philip Forgit pforgit@veanea.org



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Advocating for policy development and/or change and implementation

Organize members to speak at local and state school board meetings. Make sure that policymakers know who you are. VISIBILITY and VOICE

Develop talking points for a central issue.

Provide supporting documents and specific examples of why a policy needs to be changed or implemented.

E-mail school board members.

Write letters to the editor of local papers. (Op-Ed pieces from leadership)

<https://youtu.be/aJ2u1o7JYFY>

Dr. Steven R. Staples
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Board of Education, President
Dr. Billy Cannaday
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Remaining Public Hearings This Summer

Wednesday, August 9 – Virginia Beach

6:30 p.m.

Location: Old Donation School

Address: 4633 Honeygrove Rd, Virginia Beach, VA 23455

Wednesday, August 23 – Mecklenburg County

6:30 p.m.

Location: Park View High School

Address: 205 Park View Cir, South Hill, VA 23970

Public comment will be accepted at each of the meetings listed above. While the Board welcomes all comments from the public, they are specifically looking for feedback on the Board's work related to the following:

The Standards of Accreditation including changes to high school graduation requirements and changes to how schools will be accredited in the future

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan, identifying conditions and needs of public education, for updating the Board's comprehensive plan and annual report to the Governor and General Assembly



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Review and Next Steps

What instructional issues are important for your school, school division and local association to address?

How do these issues fit into the context of State Accountability Plan?

How can your local organize to build strength, gain capacity and effectively influence policymaking?

What is your timeline? Can some issues be addressed and “won” in a short time? Which issues will take longer?

What will be your next steps in addressing the issues you have identified?

Questions and Evaluations

Contacts

**For help with understanding instructional issues
Office of Teaching and Learning**

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**For help with Organizing
Office of Organizing and Field Support**

Your UniServ Director

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