Continuing the Journey...

Establishing Strategic Priorities for Enhancing Student Success

Jorea M. Marple, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Schools
May 9, 2011
West Virginia Board of Education
2010-2011
Priscilla M. Haden, President
Jenny N. Phillips, Vice President
Robert W. Dunlevy, Secretary

Michael I. Green, Member
Burma Hatfield, Member
Lowell E. Johnson, Member
L. Wade Linger Jr., Member
Gayle C. Manchin, Member
William M. White, Member

Brian E. Noland, Ex Officio
Chancellor
West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission

James L. Skidmore, Ex Officio
Chancellor
West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education

Jorea M. Marple, Ed.D., Ex Officio
State Superintendent of Schools
West Virginia Department of Education
Dear Superintendents,

As educational leaders, we are entrusted by the state Constitution with the responsibility of providing a thorough and efficient education to all public school students. No other group of people have this responsibility. Thus, the moral imperative to improve public education must begin with us. We must cherish this responsibility and commit to acting together to improve our schools.

We must work skillfully and thoughtfully as visionary and responsive leaders to West Virginia’s 734 public schools. We must act in ways that demonstrate to others our willingness to listen, our willingness to help, our skill in solving problems, and most of all our absolute passion for the well being of our children.

We must never take lightly the value of this work nor forget the more than 282,000 unique student faces who are counting on you, me and all educators in the state to work on their behalf.

Jenea M. Mayle
At no other time in our nation’s history have we been more compelled to transform our educational system. The future of our state and nation depends on it. Our country cannot be economically competitive, our democracy cannot thrive, and we cannot assure our children a stake in the American Dream if we do not find better ways to educate our students.

In West Virginia, we have significant issues to address in student achievement, student personal well-being, high school graduation rates and post-secondary transition. We must address these issues by building on the foundation of **Global21**: **Students deserve it. The world demands it.**

We also must continue to recognize the success of thousands of educators who have worked to move this state forward.

---

**What initiatives do we already have?**

---

**What are the barriers to success?**

---

**What can the WVDE do to support this priority?**

---
To Meet the Personal Needs of Each Student

We have more than 282,000 students in West Virginia, each with unique talents and abilities that deserve to be recognized and developed. To achieve the promise of **ALL CHILDREN LEARNING**, we must harness the power of technology and collective action to more effectively nurture the special gifts of each child and personalize the learning process. However, we cannot forget that students come to us from many circumstances that may affect their ability to learn. We cannot advance academic success if we ignore the personal, physical and social emotional needs of each student.

What initiatives do we already have?

What are the barriers to success?

What can the WVDE do to support this priority?
All our hopes and dreams for our students come together each day in the interaction between students and their teachers. It is through the able facilitation of a great teacher that the curriculum comes alive.

We must find ways to honor and reward great teaching and empower teachers to do what is in the best interest of each student. With greater accountability, must come the necessary time, tools and supports for teacher success.

To support great teaching, each school must have the leadership, professional culture and characteristics that promote great teaching. This includes opportunities for teacher leadership and opportunities to work collaboratively to enhance professional practice.

It is everyone’s job to support teaching and learning. From finance, facilities, transportation and food services, from the West Virginia Department of Education to the principal’s office, we must all act in ways that add value to the teaching for learning process.

What initiatives do we already have?

What are the barriers to success?

What can the WVDE do to support this priority?
Helping our children succeed is the best investment an individual can make in his or her own future. Failure to improve public education will result in a substantial personal and collective price to pay.

The potential for great schools lies in every community from Welch to Wheeling. But to improve, we must have the concerted and unified effort of parents, community agencies and business leaders. These actions must be intentional and coherent; designed to enrich opportunities for students; and address the significant impact that such things as poverty, poor health, apathy and hopelessness can have on our children.

Many problems that hinder student success are rooted in challenges outside the school. It takes a concerted effort of everyone to address these challenges. Schools cannot do this alone.

What initiatives do we already have?

What are the barriers to success?

What can the WVDE do to support this priority?
To Accelerate Innovation and Transform Schools to Address Global 21 Demands

Many current school organizational and instructional processes were designed more than 100 years ago to meet the needs of an agrarian and industrial age. We must challenge these age-old ways of doing business and create schools that reflect how our children will live and learn today and in the future.

We must invest in scalable innovations and rethink policies and code that limit our teachers’ and principals’ abilities to serve our students well.

As we move forward, we must realize technology is an essential tool in the educational process; we must use its expansive power to make us more efficient and to personalize and enrich the learning process.

We must help our public understand that investment in education is essential. Without a major investment in technology infrastructure on the front end, we cannot make the substantial leap forward that is necessary for our country’s future and our children’s success.

---

What initiatives do we already have?

__________________________

__________________________

What are the barriers to success?

__________________________

__________________________

What can the WVDE do to support this priority?

__________________________

__________________________
The work ahead cannot be viewed as a sprint of quick fixes. Our work ahead will be more like a triathlon than a sprint, work requiring persistence, a variety of skills, and a long-term view of creating lasting improvements. To be successful, we must exhibit improved skills of strategic planning and continuous improvement. We must work more closely with schools and teachers, monitoring implementation of our policies and programs, getting feedback, and making adjustments as necessary. Many great ideas fail, not because they are without merit, but due to poor implementation. As we plan and implement our work, we must think as intentionally about the how of the work as we do about the what. Our leadership initiatives must be coherent across the state and demonstrate a cohesive, well-planned approach to change.

What initiatives do we already have?

What are the barriers to success?

What can the WVDE do to support this priority?
When we accept the role as leaders in public education, we also accept the responsibility and accountability for bringing about results. This is the promise we make to our children and the obligation we have to the taxpayers of West Virginia. This means being clear about the results we want for our children and creating transparent and pervasive accountability systems to measure our progress. We must earn the trust and respect of our stakeholders by being accountable for the results that matter. Furthermore, the valued outcomes we want for our children should drive all our actions. These valued outcomes are:

1. All students will meet or exceed state, national and international curriculum standards that incorporate the acquisition of 21st century skills through engaging opportunities in the arts, world languages, health, physical education and career/technical education as well as the core subjects of reading/English/language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.

2. All students will develop the personal skills and dispositions of wellness, responsibility, self-direction, ethical character, cultural awareness and good citizenship in an environment that is caring and safe.

3. All students will graduate from high school prepared for post-secondary education and career success through personalized pathways and guidance that focus students on productive and satisfying lives.

What initiatives do we already have?

What are the barriers to success?

What can the WVDE do to support this priority?
This brings me to the most important aspect of our journey, **OUR PURPOSE**. Each of the things we have talked about today: the importance of acting now, the four key priorities for action, the Pathway, and the accountability Promise are all designed to bring about what we must accomplish for our students. Sometimes, those things are best expressed in a few words. These are mine. What I want for West Virginia students are the same things I wanted for my own now grown children:

“**Good Kids Doing Great Work**”

Developing students who are healthy, responsible, and self-directed and who have the knowledge and Global21 skills that will bring them satisfying and productive lives.

---

**What initiatives do we already have?**

---

**What are the barriers to success?**

---

**What can the WVDE do to support this priority?**

---