



West
Virginia
Achieves

Framework for 21st Century School Systems

2004 - 2014

“Learning for All . . . Whatever It Takes”

*West Virginia Department of Education
West Virginia Achieves Implementation Model*

*“Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it.
Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.”*

-Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

*“There are countless ways of
achieving greatness,
but any road to achieving one’s
maximum potential must be built on a
bedrock of respect for the individual,
a commitment to excellence and a
rejection of mediocrity.”*

-Unknown



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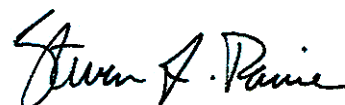
Foreword

The Framework for High Performing School Systems represents a major initiative to accomplish the accountability standards of West Virginia Achieves. West Virginia Achieves is a comprehensive series of interrelated programs and policies intended to bring both quality and equity to West Virginia public schools. This Framework is intended to achieve three specific purposes: (1) to provide a guide for transforming local school systems to “learning for all” organizations, (2) to help focus leadership and technical assistance activities of state, regional, and local educational agencies, and (3) to provide a unified approach and common language for school system improvement in West Virginia.

The Framework for High Performing School Systems was developed by a 100 member committee of West Virginia Department of Education and Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) staff. Representation was also included from the Office of Education Performance Audits and the Center for Professional Development. Completed during a series of nine development sessions, this Framework reflects research on high performing school systems and a literature review of successful practice. Once drafted, the document was reviewed by experts in school and school system improvement and by West Virginia superintendents of schools attending the annual summer Superintendents’ Leadership Institute.

To accomplish the mission of West Virginia Achieves, it is essential that state, regional, and local educational agencies share a common focus, a unified plan, and a coordinated approach to school system improvement. However, leadership and technical assistance must be customer focused and responsive to locally identified needs. Thus, this Framework is not intended to be a “one size fits all” approach to improvement. Rather, it is a lens through which local school systems can view their overall belief systems, processes, and programs compared to high performing school systems across the nation. Through this self-analysis, School System Leadership Teams can determine future improvements.

Through this Framework, the West Virginia Board of Education and the West Virginia Department of Education commit to responding to the varied needs of the 55 school systems. Differing in size, culture, and organizational capacity, no two school systems are alike. Nevertheless, all students deserve the same high quality educational experience wherever they attend school. Therefore, the Department of Education adopts a “Whatever It Takes” commitment to reaching the West Virginia Achieves mission of “Mastery and Beyond for All” and “Closing the Achievement Gap.”



Dr. Steven L. Paine
State Superintendent of Schools

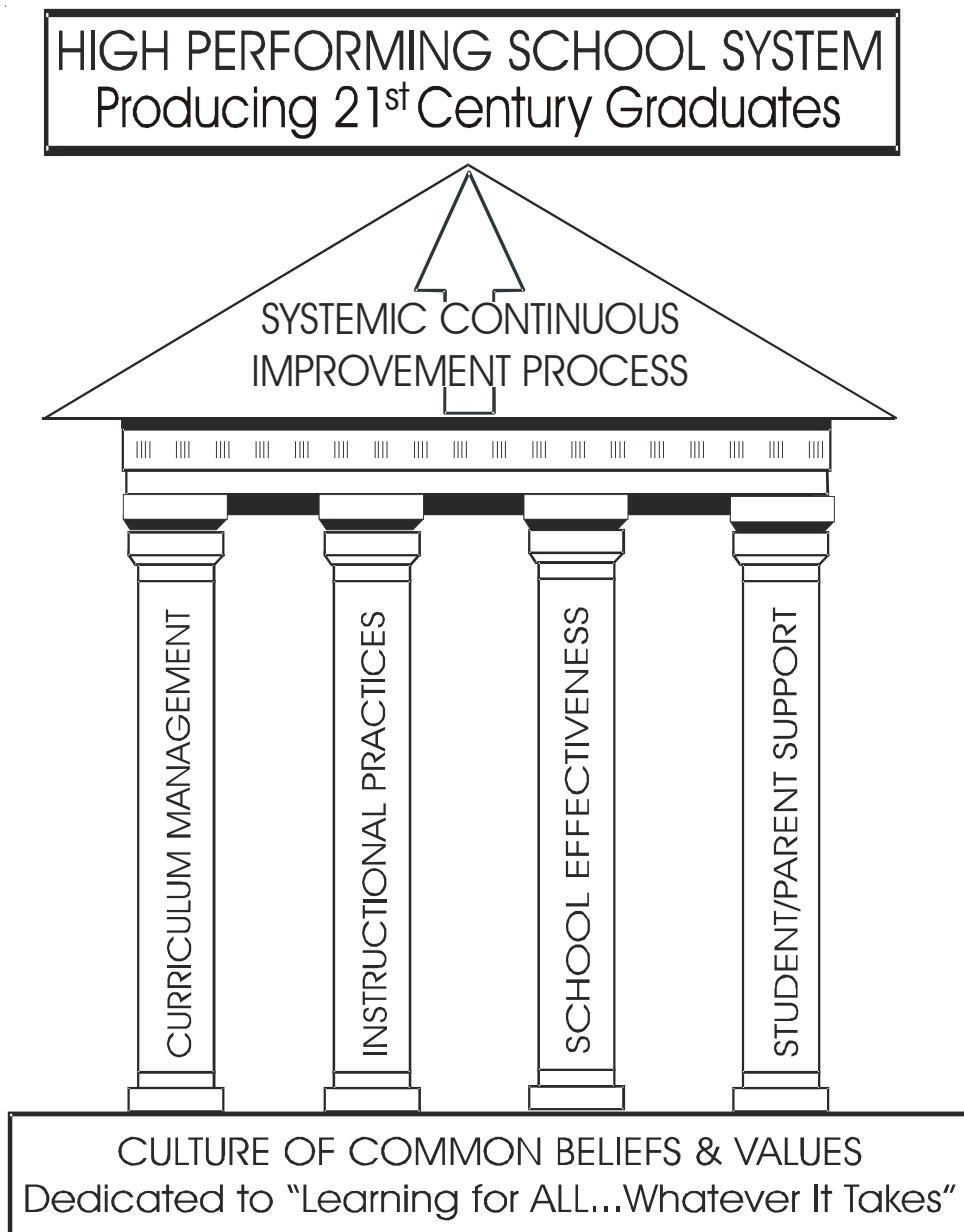
Rationale Framework for High Performing School Systems

The West Virginia Achieves accountability standards require widespread transformation of the current educational system. Any reform approach targeted at individual schools, in isolation from the broader system, is not likely to result in either significant transformation or lasting change. The West Virginia Department of Education and the eight Regional Education Service Agencies believe that strong leadership and systemic change must occur across each of the 55 West Virginia school systems. With that belief, the following six premises establish the rationale for a school system approach to improvement:

1. Local boards of education are legally and morally responsible for the results produced in the schools they govern.
2. School systems and individual schools, structured as they are now, are not designed to achieve the accountability standards of West Virginia Achieves.
3. Bringing all students to mastery and beyond and closing the achievement gap will occur only when there is systemic improvement led by the board of education, superintendent, and central office staff coupled with commitment, innovation, and focus at the school level.
4. In order to transform the current system, all educators must be committed to professional growth and to creating “learning communities” within the central office and the individual schools. These communities should be focused on finding ways to create high levels of learning for all students.
5. The Framework for High Performing School Systems acts as a guide, not a recipe, for system improvement. A “Learning for All” school system is not a series of purchased programs or “add-ons.” A “Learning for All” school system must be designed and built through the informed, collaborative, and intentional actions of the local leadership.
6. Systemic change requires a culture of core beliefs, long term planning, commitment to continuous improvement, and focused transformational leadership at the school and school system level.

Framework for High Performing School Systems

This graphic representation illustrates the major components of the Framework for High Performing School Systems. High performing school systems appear to share three broad commonalities: (1) strong core beliefs that shape the culture of the system; (2) system-wide strategies that enhance curriculum, instruction, overall school effectiveness, and student/parent support; and (3) use of a systemic continuous improvement process to bring about change. These commonalities are discussed in detail in the succeeding pages of this document.



Framework Mission and Goals

MISSION

By 2014, the West Virginia Department of Education and the eight Regional Education Service Agencies will help create systemic conditions, processes, and structures within the West Virginia public school system that result in (1) all students mastering the essential curriculum and beyond and (2) closing the achievement gap among sub-groups of the student population.

GOALS

CULTURE

Goal 1: To inspire the development of a cohesive organizational culture, based on core beliefs, that enhances staff performance on behalf of all students

STRATEGIES

Goal 2: To assure that all students master an appropriately prioritized and sequenced K-12 curriculum that develops enduring understanding, essential skills, and critical knowledge as defined through the policies of the West Virginia Board of Education and the West Virginia Content Standards and Objectives

Goal 3: To assure that each teacher utilizes research-based instructional design, management, delivery, and assessment systems that result in highly engaged students who achieve mastery and beyond of the essential curriculum

Goal 4: To assure that all schools exemplify the leadership, culture, and organizational practices consistent with effective schools research and possess the commitment, knowledge, and support to create structures and services that result in all students mastering the essential curriculum

Goal 5: To assure that all students receive the support they need to achieve mastery and beyond of the essential curriculum and that all parents are treated as valued partners in their student's educational process

PROCESS

Goal 6: To develop knowledgeable and skilled leaders able to use effectively a systemic continuous improvement process to enhance school and school system effectiveness

Goal 1: Development of a Culture that Reflects Core Beliefs

The overall beliefs and values in a school system play a powerful role in student achievement. These values and beliefs come together to form an organizational culture that can either enhance or negate student learning. In high performing school systems dedicated to systemic continuous improvement, a first step in improvement is reaching consensus among stakeholders on core beliefs. Once accomplished, these beliefs become public statements that reflect the system's collective view on such things as student capacity for learning, responsibility of school staff for student learning, role of parent and community, etc. Once defined, core beliefs are often referred to and become a guide for personal and organizational decision-making. Although each school system must define its own beliefs, the following statements represent those commonly held in high performing schools and school systems:

- All children will achieve mastery of the essential curriculum, given appropriate time and conditions.
- Schools and school systems are responsible for creating the conditions necessary for all students to achieve mastery.
- Commitment to high standards in all aspects of the organization is essential to produce mastery for all.
- Strong instructional leadership and highly qualified personnel are required to build the systems and develop the culture to achieve mastery for all.
- Parents, treated as valued and respected partners involved in the activities of the school, enhance student learning.
- The primary measures of school and system success are the increase of students who achieve mastery and beyond and the decrease in the achievement gap among student sub-groups.
- Transforming a school system to produce “mastery for all” requires a systemic continuous improvement process.

Goals 2-5: Implementation of High Yield Strategies Related to Curriculum, Instruction, School Effectiveness and Student/Parent Support

When implementing strategies to improve school and school system effectiveness, systems must answer one pivotal question: “What affects overall student achievement?” Or phrased in improvement terms, “What conditions do we control that can be **altered** to improve student achievement?” When answered, it is clear that nearly all issues related to student achievement derive from four broad areas. Those areas are: (1) the quality of curriculum, “What we teach”; (2) the quality of instruction, “How we teach”; (3) the overall effectiveness of schools, “Where we teach”; and (4) the unique characteristics and background of the student, “Who we teach.” The quality of each area can either enhance or negate the overall level of student performance. Together these four variables provide a clear organizational model for school system improvement.

A review of high performing school systems across the nation and of current literature on successful practice reveals significant commonalities. Schools systems that are closing the achievement gap and bringing increasing numbers of students to mastery use many similar approaches. Though different in specific detail, high performing school systems are proactive in managing

<p style="text-align: center;">CURRICULUM</p> <p>To assure that all students are taught a rigorous 21st century curriculum as defined by the mission and goals of West Virginia Department of Education and the WV Content Standards and Objectives</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">INSTRUCTION</p> <p>To assure that each classroom teacher utilizes research-based 21st century instructional design, management, delivery, and assessments that results in highly engaged students who achieve high levels of performance</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">High Yield Strategies</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">High Yield Strategies</p>
<p>Focus on rigorous performance in core subjects including Reading/English Language/Arts, mathematics, science, foreign language, civics, government, economics, arts, history and geography</p> <p>Emphasis on 21st century content including global awareness, financial, economic and business literacy, civic literacy, and health and wellness awareness</p> <p>Implementation of a rigorous standards-based curriculum for all students that aligns with the WV Content Standards and Objectives (WVCSOs) and includes 21st century content, learning skills and technology tools</p> <p>Prioritization and mapping of curriculum objectives Prek-12 to assure articulation and alignment</p> <p>Development of system-wide grade level performance benchmarks for student achievement</p> <p>Development of formative assessments and that include 21st century content, learning skills and technology tools that align with district benchmarks and curriculum maps</p> <p>Implementation of a Prek-12 system-wide cohesive standards-based model for assuring information and communication literacy</p> <p>Implementation of a Prek-12 cohesive standards-based model for teaching mathematics in a 21st Century context</p> <p>Implementation of a support system for enhancing curriculum quality such as training and support for school curriculum teams, peer unit development, availability of 21st century technology tools and content specific professional development</p> <p>Development of a curriculum monitoring process such as Classroom Walkthroughs and curriculum audits to gather information for continuous improvement</p>	<p>Expectation that classroom environments be nurturing and supportive with respect for individual differences and high expectations for all</p> <p>Identification of and consistent use of 21st century research-based instructional management practices that result in focused, productive, collaborative and adaptable classrooms that support self-directed learning</p> <p>System-wide selection and pervasive use of a standards-based framework for unit and lesson design that address the WV CSOs, develop deep understanding and integrate the teaching of 21st century content, learning skills and technology tools</p> <p>System-wide instructional approach that develops students as self-directed learners who understand performance standards and use reflective practice for improving work</p> <p>Use of a differentiated instructional model designed to meet the needs of varied learners and provide relevancy to the content</p> <p>Use of research-based high yield instructional strategies in all classrooms that develop 21st century learners</p> <p>Use of formative assessments to modify instruction with greater use of authentic performance assessments to determine student level of mastery</p> <p>Adjustment of instructional time by grade, class, school and system to meet the needs of varied learners</p> <p>Integration of “writing to inform,” vocabulary development and comprehension development strategies in all classrooms in all content areas</p> <p>System-wide approach to student acceleration through such practices as scaffolding and previewing</p> <p>Implementation of a teacher instructional support system that provides time and assistance to teachers for data analysis, cooperative planning, observation and feedback, reflective practice and professional growth</p> <p>Use of an instructional monitoring system such as district Walkthroughs, surveys, focus group, etc., that collect data for school and district improvement, teacher support and school improvement</p>

Goals 2-5: Implementation of High Yield Strategies Related to Curriculum, Instruction, School Effectiveness and Student/Parent Support (continued)

curriculum, enhancing instruction, improving overall school effectiveness, and supporting students and parents. The chart below uses these four areas as an organizational structure for displaying “high yield strategies” common among these school systems. The chart provides a very brief description of each high yield strategy; further definitions and explanations of these strategies appear in documents accompanying this Framework.

As systems in West Virginia develop Five-Year Strategic Plans, the four areas and the listing of strategies can help guide the decision-making of the School System Planning Team. There is no definitive guide from the research as to which practice must come first and in which sequence practices should emerge. These decisions must come from study, from informed debate, and from analysis of local conditions. For each of the high yield strategies, the staffs of the West Virginia Department of Education and the eight Regional Education Service Agencies stand ready to assist with a variety of leadership and technical assistance resources.

<p style="text-align: center;">SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS</p> <p>To assure that all schools have the leadership, culture and organizational practices representative of 21st century effective schools</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SUPPORT/PARENT COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS</p> <p>To assure that all students receive the support they need to achieve high levels of performance in the West Virginia Content Standards and Objectives and that all parents and community members are treated as valued partners in the educational process</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">High Yield Strategies</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">High Yield Strategies</p>
<p>Creation of a system-wide culture of support, trust and collaboration among the schools and the central office focused on creating conditions for all student’s success</p> <p>Development of a clear system mission, core beliefs, performance goals and strategic plan to provide focus to school improvement efforts and develop 21st century learners</p> <p>On-going support and leadership development for principals/assistant principals that enhance ability to create a learning-centered school that prepares graduates for the 21st century</p> <p>Development and implementation of a consistent district-wide school improvement process that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A broad understanding of the need to develop 21st century graduates and knowledge of the 21st century school and classroom Frameworks • Professional development for school strategic planning committee members on strategic planning, continuous improvement, the correlates of effective schools and the Frameworks for 21st Century Schools and Classrooms • A system structure, expectations and resources to support the work of school strategic planning committees • A data management system to analyze data trends and establish priorities for school improvement • Support for school-based learning communities focused on strategies to achieve 21st century school performance goals • Support for school professional development that is on-going, embedded and aligned with the school’s improvement goals • A district monitoring system that requires continuous progress and accountability for results as outlined in the school and district plans • Support to schools for arranging time prior to and during the instructional term for meaningful staff planning, collaboration and problem solving related to the school’s improvement plan 	<p>Culture that accepts responsibility for all students regardless of background or previous achievement</p> <p>Innovative research-based approaches to meeting specific student sub-group needs that help them achieve high levels of proficiency as a 21st century learner</p> <p>Comprehensive student support system for addressing student physical, social and emotional needs</p> <p>Systemic developmental guidance and counseling program with character and career education components that develop 21st century personal and workplace productivity skills</p> <p>System-wide programmatic strategies that develop students who are ethical, accountable, self-directed, can work collaboratively, be adaptable and can assume leadership as tasks require</p> <p>Effective student transitioning programs designed to assure a positive seamless transfer from school to school Pre k to post secondary</p> <p>System-wide expectation that parents be treated as respected and valued partners</p> <p>System-wide parent education, involvement and communication system that contributes to student academic and personal success</p> <p>Proactive community collaboration and partnerships that build mutual respect, support and understanding</p> <p>Data-based system for monitoring student academic and personal progress that results in appropriate and timely interventions</p> <p>Effective pre school early intervention programs to assure a foundation of academic, physical and social/emotional success</p>

Goal 6: Systemic Continuous Improvement Process

High performing school systems share not only common strategies for change but also share common methods of bringing about that change. Committed to continuous improvement, to long term planning, and to system-wide implementation, these systems see the process of change as important as the changes themselves. Though different in specifics, the general approach and philosophy seem consistent. The listing below describes the common elements of the change process used by high performing school systems:

1. Transformational leadership that creates a “learning-centered” system
2. An expectation that change will be an on-going continuous process
3. Identification of system-wide core beliefs that drive improvement efforts
4. A well-articulated mission that includes a focus on learning for all
5. A broad understanding and commitment to the need for change based on internal and external factors
6. A focus on systemic approaches to design and implementation
7. Pervasive use of data both to target and to refine improvement efforts
8. Change initiatives and processes that address the interrelatedness of system activities and resources
9. An implementation process that reflects the cycle of “Plan, Do, Study, Act”
10. A collaboratively developed strategic plan focused on results

Building a Common Language for School System Improvement

An integral part of any change process is effective communication. Many terms used in the Framework for High Performing School Systems may be new to staff; others may have unique “working definitions” written by the Consensus Committee to align with West Virginia Board of Education policies or recommendations. The following list represents terms frequently used in the Framework document and other supporting resources.

1. **Benchmarks** - Pre-determined points during the instructional term when student mastery of specific instructional objectives is assessed
2. **Classroom Walkthrough** - A non-evaluative but focused classroom observation made for a brief period of time (3-5 minutes) to observe specific classroom practices; the Walkthrough observation is used to enhance reflective practice and to gather school-wide information regarding professional development and school improvement
3. **Continuous Improvement** - A set of activities designed to bring gradual, but continual improvement to a process through constant review and refinement
4. **Correlates of Effective Schools** – The seven characteristics identified from research present in schools able to bring all students to mastery regardless of background factors like poverty, race, gender, or ethnicity: Clear and Focused Mission, Safe Orderly Environment, High Expectations for All, Time On Task/Opportunity to Learn, Strong Instructional Leadership, Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress, and Positive Home/School Partnerships
5. **Curriculum Alignment** - The on-going process of bringing congruence to the written curriculum, taught curriculum, and assessed curriculum so (1) all that is assessed has been taught, and (2) what is taught encompasses the written curriculum
6. **Curriculum Management System** - A series of on-going interrelated activities designed to implement, support, monitor, and evaluate the system curriculum to assure that all students have access to and benefit from an aligned, high quality prioritized, and sequenced curriculum
7. **Curriculum Map** - A graphic representation of the recommended instructional sequence for curriculum objectives during the instructional year and across the grades Pre K-12 which is used as a management tool for enhancing curriculum continuity, communication, and coordination
8. **Curriculum Prioritization** - The local consensus process of assigning relative value to curriculum objectives in order to make informed instructional decisions about the amount of time allocated to an objective and the degree to which it is an instructional focus
Note: It is recommended that no objective be completely eliminated during the prioritization process
9. **Differentiated Instruction** - A systematic approach to planning curriculum and instruction for academically diverse learners; a blend of whole class, group, and individual instruction, guided by the three principles of differentiation: respectful tasks, flexible grouping, and continual assessment
10. **Effective Schools Research** – The body of research conducted in the early 70’s and 80’s as a response to the Coleman Report which concluded that schools with certain characteristics or “correlates of achievement” can bring all students to mastery levels regardless of student background characteristics

11. **Enduring Understanding** - The big ideas and important concepts that are the heart of the content area and have lasting value and application in the student's life
12. **Essential Questions** - An expression of inquiry that motivates students to seek broader understanding and deeper meaning of the content objectives
13. **Formative Assessment** - Periodic evaluation of the student's achievement level of the WV Content Standards and Objectives used to adjust instructional time and strategies so all students will achieve proficiency
14. **High Yield Instructional Strategies** – Categories of instructional activities that have been verified through research to correlate with high student achievement
15. **Instructional Management Practices** – Commonly agreed upon practices within a school for conducting routine tasks in the classroom and organizing the instructional process
16. **Instructional Management System** - A series of on-going interrelated activities designed to implement, support, monitor, and evaluate the system's instructional process to assure that all students are engaged in and benefiting from the instructional program
17. **Learning Community** – A group of educators within a school or school system that work to create climate that focuses on reflective practice, collegiality, and ongoing professional development targeted toward improvement of student learning
18. **Monitoring System** - An on-going system to collect data on a program, designed to provide feedback on whether the program is fulfilling its functions, addressing the targeted population, and/or producing those services intended; monitoring is different from evaluation; its purpose is to help refine and make “in-course” corrections
19. **Objective** - Grade and subject specific descriptions of the knowledge and skills needed to achieve proficiency of the content standards
20. **Organizational Culture** – The overall pattern of beliefs and values of an organization that (a) manifests itself in policies, procedures, and organizational structures and (b) ultimately shapes the behavior of personnel
21. **Pacing Guide** - A graphic representation or “timeline” illustrating the sequence and amount of time allocated to instructional objectives during the school term
22. **Performance Assessment** - An evaluative method usually judged with a pre-determined rubric that requires students to demonstrate a level of proficiency of the WV Content Standards and Objectives by applying knowledge to authentic tasks such as projects, presentations, activities, exercises, or problem-solving
23. **Performance Descriptors** - Narrative explanations of five levels of student achievement (distinguished, above mastery, mastery, partial mastery, and novice) used by the teacher to assess student attainment of the WV Content Standards and Objectives
24. **Prioritization Criteria** - The basis for assigning relative value to curriculum objectives based on (a) the overall importance for a student's enduring understanding of the content, (b) the importance of the objective as a prerequisite to the next level of learning, (c) the results of prior assessments of student proficiency, and (d) the value of the objective on high stakes testing
25. **Programmatic Level** – The organization of educational programs and services for delivery to students according to the students' common developmental characteristics: Early Childhood (Pre-K to Grade 4), Middle Childhood (Grade 5 to Grade 8), and Adolescent Education (Grade 9 to Grade 12)
26. **Proficiency** – The level of student achievement for students who achieve at the “mastery, above mastery, or distinguished” levels
27. **Reading Comprehension** – The degree to which students derive not only the facts from a written passage but the degree to which they gain an understanding of its meaning; when all teachers within a school use techniques to develop comprehension (pre-reading vocabulary development, guiding questions, graphic organizers, jig saw activities, etc.) overall achievement improves

28. **Reflective Practice** – An improvement practice designed to promote the teachers’ self analysis of instructional practice by thoughtfully considering their own classroom practices and comparing the results to those of successful practitioners; reflective practice is often accompanied by coaching from skilled practitioners who guide the reflective process
29. **Rubric** - A pre-determined detailed scoring guide used by teachers to communicate and evaluate levels of student performance of a complex task
30. **School System Transformation** – The rethinking, reorganization, and refocusing of school system organizational structures and expectations to achieve the new mission of “Learning for All”
31. **Standards-Based Curriculum** - A curriculum framework that establishes clear comprehensive exit learning expectations for all students, further defines the expectations through specific grade level and subject objectives, and provides performance descriptors for evaluating student level of achievement relative to the WV Content Standards and Objectives
32. **Standards-Based Unit** - Extended instructional sequence involving several lessons of related objectives organized around a broad theme, enduring understanding, or essential question that often culminates in a performance assessment
33. **Strategic Plan** - A document used by an organization to align its overall operation and budget with organizational priorities, missions, and objectives; a strategic plan should include core beliefs, a mission statement, a description of the agency’s long-term goals and evidence of achieving those goals, objectives, strategies or means the organization plans to use to achieve these goals and objectives; the strategic plan may also identify external factors that could affect achievement of long-term goals
34. **Student Achievement Variables** – The major variables controlled and/or influenced by the school system that impact student achievement; these variables are quality of curriculum, quality of instruction, quality of school organization and environment, and the family background and characteristics of the student
35. **Support System** - A network of people who interact and remain in communication for mutual assistance; also, resources, activities, and information that enable staff to accomplish assigned responsibilities
36. **System** – A series of interrelated components designed to achieve a common goal; as applied to a school system, a series of integrated activities, procedures, policies, and professional development designed to achieve a common purpose
37. **Systemic Change** - Systemic change is change that occurs in all aspects and levels of a system; systemic change requires redesign of fundamental approaches within an organization while considering the effect on all other aspects of the organization
38. **System-Wide School Improvement Cycle** – A series of steps and/or processes expected within each school to develop and implement the school’s strategic plan
39. **Transformational Leadership** –The ability to affect the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of a significant number of individuals through intentional actions and the creation of a body of work
40. **Understanding by Design (UbD)** - A three stage instructional planning framework that helps teachers develop quality standards-based lessons that result in student proficiency and enduring understanding
41. **Values and Beliefs** – The standards or qualities considered worthwhile and desirable by an organization; the statements, principles, or doctrine that the system accepts as true and uses to guide decisions and shape behavior
42. **Writing to Inform** – Nonfiction writing assignments used to argue, criticize, define, describe, discuss, evaluate, explain, compare and contrast, or summarize topics in the classroom; consistent use of writing to inform assignments in all content areas and consistent judging by a commonly used rubric correlates with high student achievement
43. **WV Written Curriculum** - The written scope and sequence of what students should know and be able to do as the result of the instructional process as defined by the WV Content Standards and Objectives (also referred to as the essential curriculum)

REFLECTIONS: Nurturing a Collaborative Spirit

In West Virginia, we have a history of facing challenges with great commitment and determination. Born from conflict, our state has been the site of great battles and great tragedies. Rugged terrain, economic instability, and rural isolation have all played a role in our collective experience. Certainly, most would find these daunting. But to West Virginians, they define and shape our character. We are people who understand “uphill” battles, who make the most of scarce resources, and who have learned to care for and depend on each other. It is with this spirit and character that we will face the challenges of a new era in education.

The fundamental mission of public schools has changed. From “Learning for Some” to “Learning for All,” the new federal accountability standards require that all students master the essential curriculum regardless of race, ethnicity, poverty, disability, or language deficits. This legislation establishes a clear mandate: every student not only has the right to go to school, but also has the right to exit with the knowledge and skills necessary for productive citizenry.

Whether one agrees with the specifics of the accountability standards or not, two facts remain clear: (1) accountability for both quality and equity in student achievement will certainly continue, and (2) there are increasing numbers of schools and school systems that have been able to bring all students to mastery or beyond. If you can build one, you can build more than one. Thus, it seems prudent to learn from these school systems and to apply their experiences, as appropriate, to our own.

As we begin this collective journey to build a school system responsive to all students, perhaps our greatest resource will be each other. Though we can learn from those outside our borders, we must also commit to greater collaboration and less competition within our borders. We have a common focus, a common school improvement language, and a common framework; surely then, our collective wisdom and experience can chart the way for collective success. We are not strangers to great challenges. West Virginians are people of great hope, great determination, and great heart. Together, we can continue to build a great school system that assures the best for the students we serve.



David Stewart
State Superintendent of Schools
West Virginia Department of Education

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