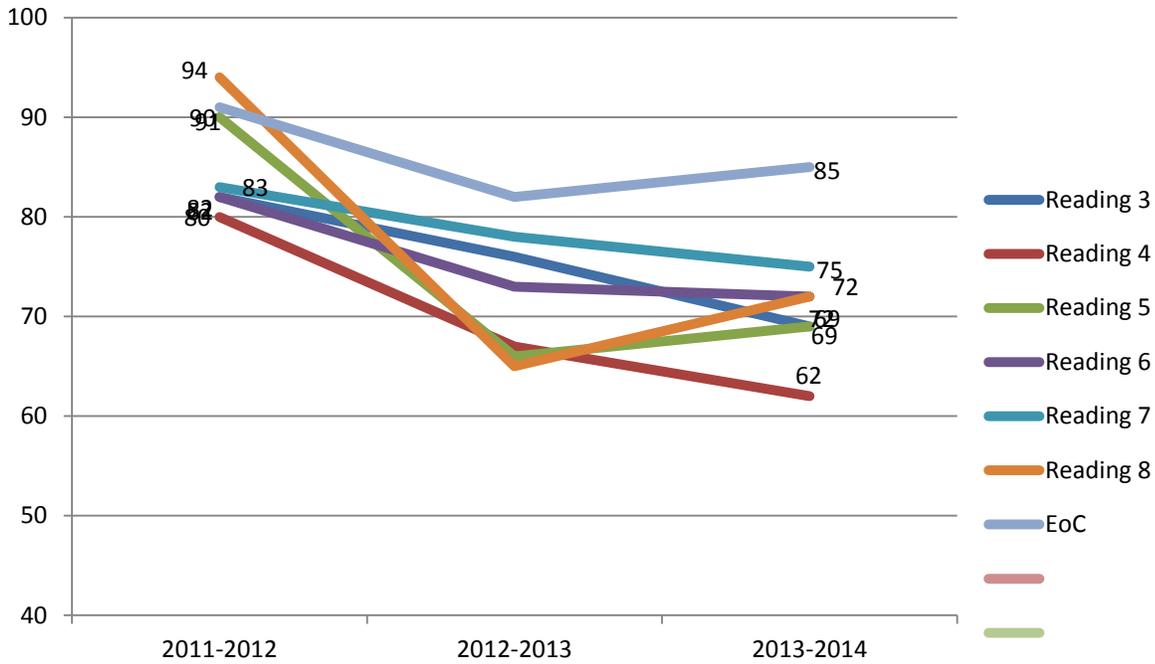
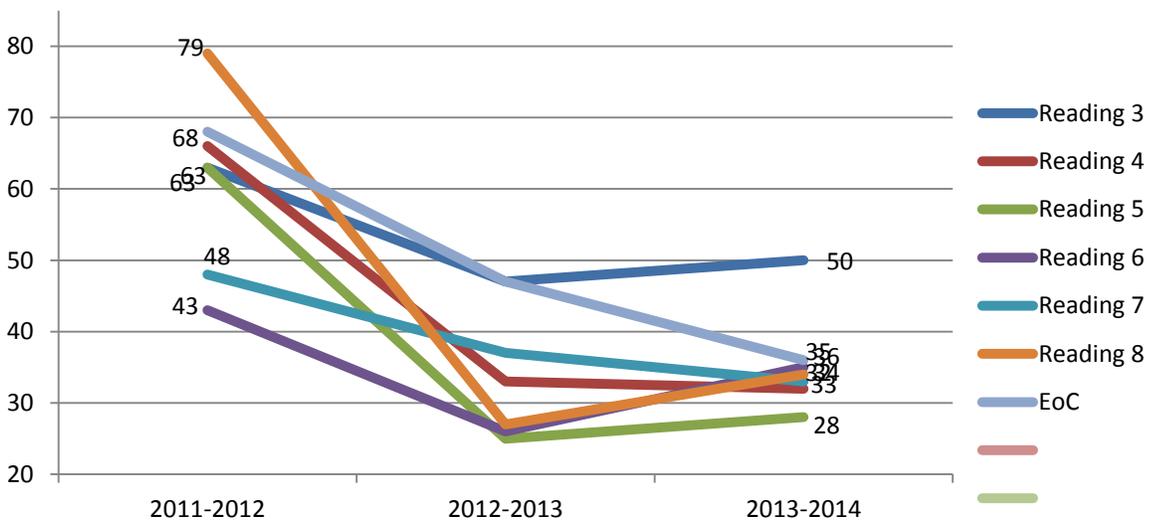


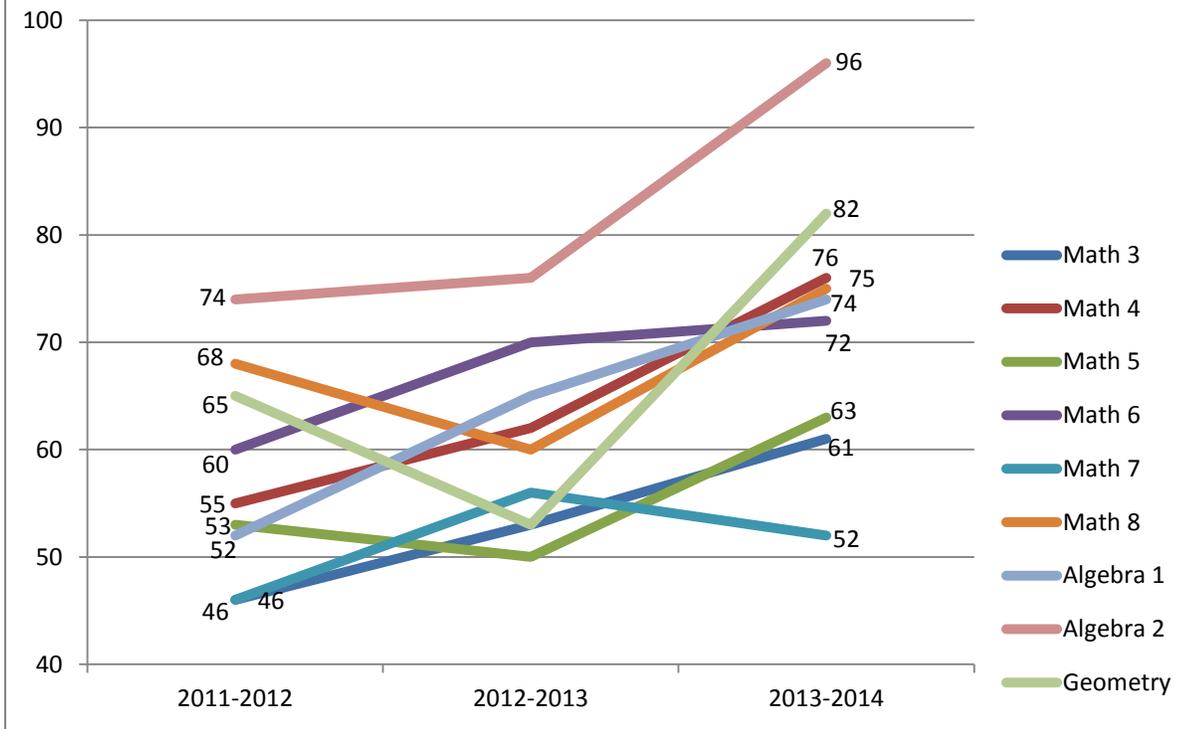
Reading Performance by Grade Level 2012 to 2014



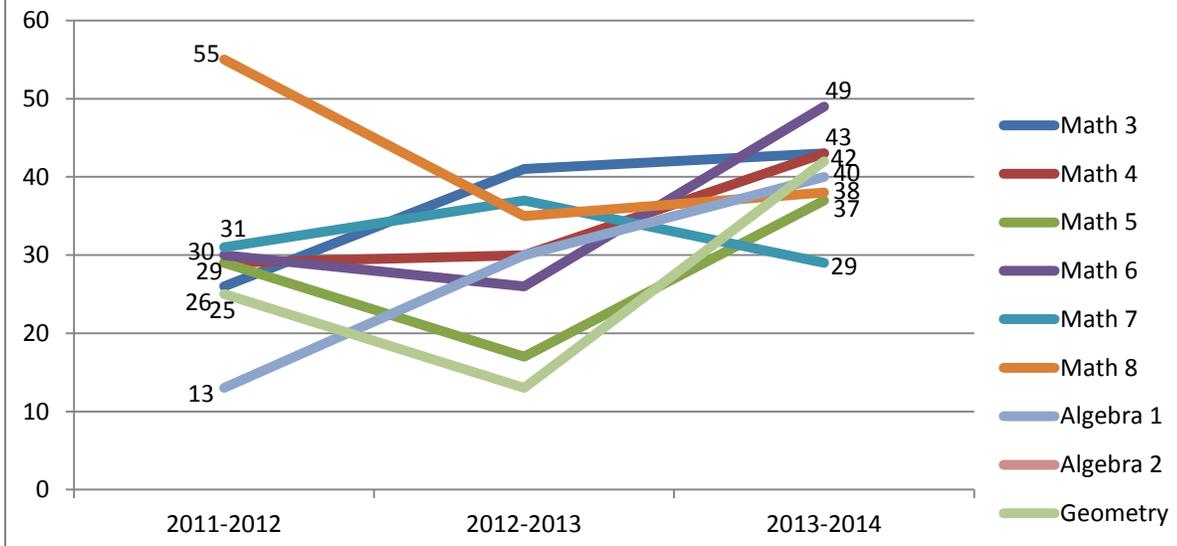
Special Ed. English Performance by Grade Level 2012 to 2014



Math Performance by Grade Level 2012 to 2014



Special Ed. Math Performance by Grade Level 2012 to 2014





Amherst County Public Schools

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To: Amherst County Public Schools Board Members
Dr. Steven Nichols, ACPS Superintendent

From: Brendon L. Albon – Supervisor of Mathematics, Science & Gifted Education

Date: September 25, 2014

Re: Mathematics Progress

Background Information

In 2009 the Virginia Board of Education (VBoE) adopted new and more rigorous Mathematics Standards of Learning (SOL) and Spring 2012 new tests were administered to all students across the Commonwealth. Due to the increased rigor and change in the question style of these assessments, schools across the Commonwealth saw a drop in their Mathematics assessment performance data. Amherst County Public Schools saw congruent drops in test scores.

After the 2013 Spring testing, Amherst County had five out of ten schools meeting accreditation in mathematics and in 2014 we have seven out of ten schools meeting accreditation. In 2013 Spring testing Amherst County had three out of ten schools meeting the federal AMOs for mathematics, while in 2014 we have nine out of ten schools meeting the federal AMOs for mathematics. These data trends are clearly laid out in the accompanying addendums.

Specific activities that contributed to these successes include:

- Emphasis on strengthening computational skills K-12
- Emphasis on Algebraic thinking 5-9
- Emphasis on concrete mathematical learning and converting concrete concepts to abstract concepts
- Provision and assurance of appropriate materials and texts
- Teacher training on understanding cognitive levels within Standards of Learning for appropriate backward design planning
- Development and implementation of Math Lead Team, who carry school specific responsibilities in developing mathematics instruction.
- Implementation of student tiering and intervention tools in mathematics
- Classroom observations with feedback
- Push in student tutoring by math supervisor at Amelon and Madison Heights.

In an effort to continually improve student performance on all of the SOL Tests, we plan to invest significant amounts of time this year in supporting the administrators and teachers at those schools that are in warning status, as well as push additional specific supports for all other schools.

Other initiatives for Amherst County Public Schools in 2014-2015 include:

- Specific emphasis on K-2 learning of Number Sense.
- Development of Guided Math strategies.
- Algebraic Instruction with Manipulatives
- Classroom Observations and Feedback
- Continuation of previously implemented strategies that provided success.



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To: School Board Members
Dr. Steven Nichols, Superintendent

From: Marymargaret Cardwell, Supervisor of Federal Programs
Wayne Lyle, Supervisor of Humanities

Date: September 25, 2014

Re: School Improvement Initiatives

Background Information

As you know, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) adopted new and more challenging English Standards of Learning in 2010. Due to the increased rigor of these standards and assessments, schools across the state saw a drop in their English scores, even those that had historically experienced success with the previous standards and assessments. The list below includes strategies our schools began using last year in an effort to increase student achievement:

2013-2014 Implementation of Strategies

- Developed and implemented new lesson plan templates
- Used Storyworks in grades 4-5 that included paired fiction and nonfiction passages
- Used interactive notebooks, with an increased focus on explicitly teaching vocabulary
- Piloted Thinking Maps and Write from the Beginning
- Became more specific and intentional with identifying and monitoring students in need of interventions
- Used intervention periods to review previously taught material, which included SOL Released Items

Next Steps

In an effort to improve student performance on all of the SOL Tests, we plan to invest significant amounts of time this year in supporting the administrators and teachers at all schools. ACPS has several teachers who are either new to the profession or school division, so members of the instructional team are doing or planning to do the following:

- Conduct several classroom observations throughout the year
- Plan professional development that focuses on using PALS data and resources to screen and monitor students' reading achievement and plan differentiated, small group instruction
- Review the division's literacy plan before the end of the first nine weeks
- Offer the word study course this spring



Amherst County Public Schools

To: Amherst County Public Schools Board Members
Dr. Steven Nichols, Superintendent, Amherst County Public Schools

From: Jim Gallagher, Supervisor of Student Services

Date: September 25, 2014

Re: Targeted Special Education School Improvement Supports and Resources (13-14/14-15)

Strategy Implementation:

- ACPS secured support through a team from the JMU Training and Technical Assistance Center (T/TAC) with the focus of assessing, developing, and implementing effective collaborative instructional practices throughout the division. In addition, the T/TAC team provides professional development related to evidence based instructional strategies in the classroom to improve student performance.
 - The T/TAC team was on-site in Amherst County throughout the 2013-14 school year providing job embedded professional development to teacher teams at several elementary schools.
 - The T/TAC teams have worked with Central Office staff and school level administration to evaluate current programs and resources, provide feedback to teacher teams, provide professional development to both teachers and paraprofessionals, and to work with schools to revise master schedules to effectively integrate collaborative instructional practices and time for intervention.
- Elementary teams attended the T/TAC sponsored Special Education Program Improvement Institute on April 30, 2014, and participated in the second training in this series on July 30 and 31, 2014 at James Madison University.
- The Supervisor of Student Services and the Special Education Instructional Support Specialist facilitated the development of a new lesson plan model that incorporates all appropriate and effective components of effective lesson planning, delivery and assessment, and addresses the identification of specific differentiation needs for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students. The new lesson plan model is under consideration to be used as a division wide model in Amherst County Public Schools.
- The Supervisor of Student Services and the Special Education Instructional Support Specialist have provided substantial on-site observations of and participation in classrooms, PLC groups, leadership teams, child study meetings and intervention blocks in order to provide feedback and direction to teachers and teacher teams regarding effective practices and areas for improvement.
- The ACPS Special Education Instructional Support Specialist has provided substantial on-site coaching to teachers and paraprofessionals throughout the division in order to improve instructional practices and increase the effectiveness of instructional delivery targeting increased student growth outcomes.
- The ACPS Special Education Instructional Support Specialist provided training to elementary school personnel on implementation of the Touch Math program in order to increase math calculation and other essential skills.
- The Supervisor of Student Services and the Special Education Instructional Support Specialist provided support and direction to special education case managers regarding the maximization of both instructional and testing accommodations as appropriate in order to provide students with disabilities an adequate opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in the classroom and during testing.
- The decision was made to use a split block for students in 9th grade who require extra time to learn and master the Algebra 1 material. (utilized for students with and without disabilities)
- The Math Supervisor pushed into elementary classrooms to assist with tutoring and interventions for tier 3 students in the area of mathematics, impacting both students with and without disabilities.
- The Supervisor of Student Services and the Special Education Instructional Support Specialist provided substantial supplemental instructional resources for both inclusive general education and special education classrooms. Initial and on-going training is being provided to teachers to ensure that these supports are implemented with fidelity.

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Resources provided, but are not limited to, include:

- Hands On Standards: lessons for teaching with math manipulatives
- Math Madness – Virginia
- Building Fluency Cards (Reading) for grades 1-6
- Red Hot Root Words for grades 3 – 9
- EZread Sight Word Phrase Flash Cards
- EZread Fry Phrase & Short Sentence Cards
- Word Warm-ups 2: Two-Syllable and Multisyllabic Words
- Qualitative Reading Inventory – 5 (middle schools)
- Word Ladders for elementary and middle school

Further professional development provided to support special education instruction:

- Comprehensive back to School Special Education Training (August, 2013)
- Targeted Interventions for Reading (Nov, 2013)
- Thinking Maps training (Ongoing throughout year)
- Paraprofessional Training (October, 2013)

Next Steps 2014-2015: (Supports and interventions identified during the 2013-2014 school year will continue to be provided during the current school year as they have shown to be effective in increasing outcomes for students with disabilities). Additionally:

- The Supervisor of Student Services and the Special Education Instructional Support Specialist along with a team from the JMU T/TAC met with all co-teaching teams on Tuesday, August 12, 2014 to provide training and discussion related to effective collaborative teaming practices along with presentation of models of effective collaborative instruction.
- Co-teacher teams from schools throughout the division attended the \$100,000 Classroom - A Special Education Program Improvement (SEPI) Institute on Co-Teaching on Wednesday, September 17, 2014 in Staunton, Virginia in order to provide targeted professional development in the areas initially addressed during our meeting on August 12th.
- The Supervisor of Student Services and the Special Education Instructional Support Specialist and T/TAC staff will conduct post-training classroom observations in co-taught classrooms following the September 17, 2014 Training in order to meet with teams and provide formative feedback.
- The Supervisor of Student Services and the Special Education Instructional Support Specialist and T/TAC staff will conduct a follow up meeting with co-teachers in January of 2015 in order to “check in” to determine the level of success and level of continued needs among collaborative teams.
- The Supervisor of Student Services and T/TAC staff will conduct follow up classroom observations in co-taught classrooms at ACPS to continue the monitoring and support process.
- T/TAC team supports will continue to be provided in targeted schools in ACPS during the 2014-2015 school year.
- The lesson plan model developed in the spring of 2014 will continue to be utilized in several elementary schools in ACPS and will be provided to secondary schools for consideration in implementing a consistent lesson planning process.
- The Supervisor of Student Services and the Special Education Instructional Support Specialist will continue to participate in PLC meetings to focus on grade level specific skills in related to targeted reading and math instruction and intervention.

Resources provided during 2014-2015 school year to support evidence based instruction and intervention to include (but not limited to)

- Providing all sped teachers with additional thinking maps companion materials to assist with targeting effective lesson planning and instruction to be used in collaboration with general education teachers.
- Purchase of individual iStation seats for supplemental targeted reading intervention.
- Purchase additional touch math materials for special education teachers to support professional development activities provided in this area.