EDUCATING IN REALITY—NOT IN DENIAL

How one district is changing its education model before outside forces change it for them

Salem City Schools

Salem, Virginia

About the Innovative Successful Practices Project

Dear Educator,

Beginning in 2017, the Successful Practices Network (SPN) and AASA The School Superintendents Association, have been conducting a study of innovation best practices in public K12 systems from throughout the United States, with support from global learning company Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH).

Dr. Bill Daggett has led a team of nationally recognized superintendents, researchers and data analysts to identify systems that are using innovative approaches to put students first by expanding and supporting student learning and achievement. Schools and districts were selected for further study based on a national search conducted by thought leaders and experts at HMH, SPN and AASA. HMH supported this effort by providing research and reviewers as part of its work to partner with school districts on improving student outcomes.

From that study, 25 national Innovative Successful Practices systems were identified based on their ability to demonstrate rapid improvement in student learning and preparedness through innovative organizational and instructional practices.

Each of those 25 systems collaborated with SPN and AASA to host an on-site visit, detailed data analysis and development of a case study. These case studies are intended to provide an accessible and nontechnical overview of each innovative approach that is backed up with data-driven results.

The participating systems include a wide range of geographies, demographics, student population and resource levels. In spite of those differences, each of these systems shares a common mindset that innovation can drive public education with a strong focus on serving the needs of all of their students.

We have been inspired by the lessons learned from these courageous leaders that took risks to think beyond their traditional systems and approaches. It is our hope that this work continues to inspire, inform and support public education leaders in their efforts to prepare students for success both in school and beyond school.

"The world that our children will live, work and interact in will be fundamentally different than the world we all grew up in," said Bill Daggett, Founder and Chairman, International Center for Leadership in Education. "To prepare them for success in this changing world our schools need to make fundamental changes as well. These innovative districts are paving the way and showing us how to make the necessary changes needed in our schools."

"At a time when the new school year is beginning across the nation, there is no better time than now to speak out about the value of public education and bring to the forefront the outstanding work being done by our school districts," said Daniel A. Domenech, Executive Director, AASA.

"It's important to be imagining how our classrooms and schools can look and feel different in the next decade," said Rose Else-Mitchell, Chief Learning Officer, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. "We congratulate these change-makers for creating a culture of innovation and the conditions for future-focused learning designs in their school districts to accelerate student engagement, growth, and achievement."

Introduction

Any and all innovations or improvements to instruction and learning will amount to wasted time and resources if they serve the moribund industrial model of education. Instead, leadership at Salem City Schools chooses to live, act, and educate in the real world—the one demanding that all K-12 school districts, whether they know it or not, build a new educational delivery model for this century—or wait for someone else to build it for them. Thanks to a positive restlessness and a history of continual improvement, Salem City Schools has been able to motivate an entire district to embrace the challenging work of building a new education model. They've been able to do this while keeping everyone focused on why they are committing to such an undertaking and without overwhelming them with too many initiatives and un-focused innovations.

The Challenge

In 1967, Salem, Virginia voted to become an independent city. The newfound city, however, entered into an agreement to keep its K-12 schools under the jurisdiction of Roanoke County Public Schools. The agreement was renewed for 10 years in 1973; during that time, Salem City funded the construction of a new high school and made other preparations to operate an independent school system.

In 1983, the city established an independent school division in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Today, Salem City Schools' 3,953 students span four elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school—all under the stewardship of educators driven by a "positive restlessness."

That Salem City Schools (Salem) seceded speaks to a legacy of a commitment to continual improvement and self-determination. For its educators to be satisfied, they must have the freedom to innovate constantly and as needed within broad but meaningful future-focused goals for educators *and* students. They must be able to implement the changes they believe their students need to be equipped for the world that awaits them. And they are willing to take the necessary measures, however bold or against the grain, to do so.

This quest for continual improvement is what educators at Salem refer to as "positive restlessness." It's not that they are never satisfied; it's that they are satisfied when goals are met, but this does not mean there isn't more work to be done. They set new goals, either building from current ones or, when prudent, creating new ones that meet their mission to serve students' actual needs for today's challenges.

To embody positive restlessness is to be in perpetual learning mode. It's to evaluate initiatives constantly—throughout and after—to determine points of success and areas needing improvement. It's to assess often and apply insights immediately to keep reaching for growth. It's to understand that if the world around us is changing, we must change as well.

Since its inception from positive restlessness, Salem has been known as a high quality district. Yet it aims to get better—greater—everyday. This is because current leadership lives in the real world, the world where they know—they don't think or suspect or worry, they *know*—that the industrial model of education is outdated and crumbling fast. To cling to it out of fear, nostalgia, or comfort is to fail students. In their view, the K-12 public school system's historical learning model is changing no matter what. The educators in Salem have made a conscious choice: to get in front of this tectonic shift happening in the education system and adapt how they know is best for their students, rather than wait for an outside body to tell them how to change.

Thanks to positive restlessness, Salem is once again choosing to control its education delivery model to meet all student needs relevantly and realistically. Just as they did when they seceded in 1983, they are choosing to maintain as much control over how their students learn because they know their students better than any other institution or governing body. And they love and care deeply for their students more than any outside institution or governing body could, will, or does. Who better, then, than the positively restless team at Salem to be students' constant advocates through continual improvement? Who better than their teachers to spearhead innovation in their schools so that learning for the 21st century is as real in their schools as the collapse of the 20th-century education model is outside of them?

The Innovation

In the wrong hands, positive restlessness can be overwhelming. In the right hands, it can be invigorating and inspiring. Salem has managed to toe that line shrewdly and strategically such that those who work in their schools enjoy the freedom to innovate and the responsibility to ensure all students learn with total support of leadership.

For Salem, six guiding beliefs allow positive restlessness to unlock transformation in its schools. Through a series smaller innovations, these beliefs let Salem, ultimately, truly innovate the education delivery model—one that fits with the reality of what today's learners need to create success throughout their lives.

Live in Reality, Not in Denial
The reality is: change is happening. The reality is: we have a choice. We can get ahead of the collapse of the 20th-century industrial model of education. Or we can get left behind. If we get in front of it, we stand the best chance of controlling how we change teaching and learning in our schools. If we wait, we stand the best chance of some outside body—unfamiliar with our district, our school circumstances, and the needs of our students—intervening to tell us how and what to change.

At Salem, this choice is simply the reality. At Salem, no one wins if we live in denial of this reality. This reality frames all that the educators at Salem do and inspires a district-wide belief in the positive restlessness approach to education delivery. It lends a sense of urgency around the need for change and helps its teams buy into continual improvement. It also helps make clear that giving due responsibility to teachers for their students' learning isn't a leadership or empowerment tactic; it's what we owe students.

Keep "Why" at the Forefront—Always

When asking educators to be part of significant change and take full responsibility for learners, it's crucial to keep "why" clear and present in everyone's minds. Frustrations and setbacks are normal and inevitable in service of important goals. Salem's leadership understands this and leaves room for failure and opportunities to learn from mistakes. To help carry their teams through frustrations big and small, they constantly remind them why they're working so diligently in the first place: because they love students.

As part of their annual review and continual improvement process a few years ago, Salem decided to audit its mission. Was it still up to date and relevant? Did it include the ideals that pointed everyone in the district in the direction of what's best for students? Did it resonate with all school staff? Was it strong enough to keep them motivated through transformation?

To answer these questions, leadership drew inspiration from organizational expert and author Simon Sinek. Sinek is well known in the business world for his "start with why" approach to leadership. In summary, Sinek realized that everything we do, in life and in our careers, functions on three levels derived from the biology of decision making: what we do, how we do it, and why we do it. All too often, corporations forget the why. The result is people focusing only on the what and how. At best, this means decisions can veer from the ultimate purpose of efforts. At worst, people lose sight of why they are putting time and energy into their work to such a degree that they grow demoralized and unmotivated.

Salem leadership knew the work to be done in this century's schools was too big and too pivotal to risk anyone getting distracted by minutiae and losing sight of the big picture. So they asked all educators in their schools to tell them why they chose a career in education. They asked them to write three words or succinct statements on index cards to capture what made them feel called to their profession.

One word showed up again and again: love.

A huge majority of educators said they were drawn to education because they love students and love helping them learn. The other words most frequently used were "engage" and "inspire."

Leadership knew there was no more compelling "why" than one rooted in love. In a move not often seen in education, they decided to embrace this why and build a new mission statement from it:

> *The Mission of the Salem City School Division is to provide a loving and engaging environment that inspires children to reach their full potential.*

> *Love. Engage. Inspire.*

In using "loving" and "love" in their mission statement, Salem explicitly labeled what happens in its schools every day. Salem has created a culture where everyone understands that they are contributing to a loving environment for all students—one where they can feel safe and where they feel genuinely cared for. So that they can feel confident engaging fully in their learning and, in turn, trust their teachers who ask them to aim high and get there.

Salem's mission statement—their "why"—is bedrock to all they do. It comes up often and is used to remind all staff not what they do or how they do it, but why they do it. At Salem, why is by far the most important consideration in their decisions, innovations, and all their efforts.

Be Proactive, Not Reactive
By definition, positive restlessness leaves little room for being reactive. The constant drive for improvement requires that all plans and initiatives are assessed regularly for how well they are progressing and meeting goals. Improvement plans and their routine assessment serve as measures to preclude small problems from growing into major issues. By getting in front of problems before they snowball, Salem frees up significant time to be proactive in their goals, rather than losing time reacting to problems after it's too late.

In other words, Salem spends most of its time on offense. It's from this place that they can devote so much energy, thought, and work to remodeling their education delivery model to meet 21st-century demands.

Each year, the district establishes in broad terms what schools must focus on to continue to create and implement a 21st-century learning model. They distill it down to core components, which are defined in the Plan on a Page.

The Commonwealth of Virginia requires that all school districts have a six-year plan that must be revised every two years. When Salem took a hard look at its comprehensive plan a decade ago, it was in excess of 100 pages. It did little more than collect dust. Leadership decided to create a plan so focused it could be written on the front and back of one piece of paper. The result is the Plan on a Page (the Plan). Please see Appendix 1 for the 2018 - 2024 Plan on a Page.

The Plan serves as guardrails for how and what educators in each school do to realize its future-focused goals. While each school is accountable to district goals, it's entirely up to the educators to build from the Plan and craft their own more detailed plan, as well as personal growth objectives for the year.

To support schools to this end, leadership holds the Summer Leadership Academy, a two-day workshop for educators to discuss the district's goals and objectives for the year and begin to guide schools to develop them further for their campuses. On the first day, district leaders meet with principals to discuss what in the goals and objectives might be different or new. Then the principals meet with the selection of teachers they've invited to join the academy that year. In their teams, they develop their school's plan for the year.

The district encourages principals to invite different teachers to the academy every year. Over about an eight-year period, ideally every teacher will be invited to attend the academy. This reinforces the strong belief at Salem that every educator is responsible for their students' learning; therefore they must be deeply engaged in all facets of it, including planning. This approach has the effect of creating more messengers each year to take the district goals back to their campuses and spread the word. It's powerful to equip principals with people in the building who have had a hand in writing the school's improvement plan for the year. It's also powerful to have those in the building who might not have attended the academy this year, but have in the past and understand the importance and results of the planning process.

This year, Salem's Plan on a Page focuses most intently on three district goals: personalized learning, assessment for learning, and standards-based grading. Within those overarching goals, the schools create their plans and are free to innovate—individually and collaboratively. It is up to them to determine what they will do and how to continue to improve on personalized learning delivery, fine tune their assessments for learning, and evolve to a totally standards-based grading system.

By providing explicit guardrails to innovations, schools innovate in ways that support district goals. Everyone is aligned. This puts district leadership in the advantageous and positive position of spending most of their time figuring out how to support schools, rather than solving problems created by scattered schools all working towards disparate goals that depart from what's best for students.

Love Saying "Yes"
Salem's leadership loves saying "yes" to educators' requests for resources to put an innovative idea into action. This is part and parcel with leaving it up to the educators to conceive new ideas, test them out, and embrace those that advance district and school goals. Leadership knows that if they expect this much of educators, they have to back it up with as much support as possible.

When educators come to district leadership asking for resources, they say yes—and then find a way to provide. Sometimes providing requires creativity, collaboration, and yet more innovation. But leadership is committed to saying yes to as many resource requests that continue to move the district closer to its goals and vision for a 21st-century education model as they can.

But Know When to Say "No" to Fight Initiative Fatigue
Salem's leadership grasps the magnitude of what they are asking of their educators. They also grasp that they owe it to them to remain focused on core goals so that they are not constantly distracting their educators with other ideas. Yet, coming to this understanding was a process. In the early days of the current leadership team's change efforts, they chased too many "good ideas." The result was drained teachers and drained resources. Having learned from those mistakes, today they resist the temptation of the latest silver bullet or shiny object. Instead, as they are confronted with new ideas, they ask: does this fit in with the goals we're working towards now? If the answer is no, they let the idea go or note it as a possibility in the future.

Leadership takes great care to explicitly communicate to all stakeholders where they are and are not taking on new initiatives. They do this not only to meet goals, but also to avoid fatiguing their educators with a constant stream of new ideas and initiatives that pull them in multiple different directions at once. Once a core goal has been met, only then will a new one replace it. This will then open the door to a new category of initiatives.

Yet, Salem will carry mission critical goals over year after year until they have been realized. It takes discipline to withstand trends sweeping the education industry when they don't align with the district's current core goals. But Salem never loses sight of the why—they love students. To love them is to set them up for the best, most productive, most fulfilled lives possible. And this, Salem understands, can only be possible if they keep their eye on the ball: building a totally personalized, 21st-century learning environment and embracing only the innovations to get them there.

Lastly, as Salem guides overarching improvement, they meet each individual educator where he or she is on a personal journey towards improvement. Leadership understands that the idea every educator will arrive at the same place and at the same time is as preposterous as expecting all students in the same grade are ready for the same material at the same time. Some educators are more ready for innovation and some are less ready—and that is ok. The general leadership philosophy is to influence, rather than force, all staff to embrace innovation at the pace and scope they are comfortable with at a given time.

Personalized Learning is the Future—and It Is a Mosaic
Presently, the Plan on the Page is almost totally focused on supporting the fulfillment of a totally personalized learning environment, with an emphasis on assessment *for* learning and standards-based grading, which they see as crucial vehicles of personalized learning.

Salem describes their approach to building a robust personalized learning environment in all of their schools as constructing a mosaic. The point is that it is an amalgam of several pieces coming together, pieces that will be greatly influenced by the available resources, local circumstances, and the strengths of staff. Yet, to Salem, what matters is that the mosaic take into account six factors that contribute not just to personalized learning in the classroom, but also to entire schools and districts supporting personalized learning on multiple levels. How each of the pieces of the mosaic takes shape will depend on various circumstances in a given district. What matters is that they all do take shape.

The six pieces of the personalized learning mosaic:
1. **Pedagogical Approaches**: Instruction must give students voice and choice. When students have input into what they learn, how they learn it, and how they demonstrate mastery, they will be more engaged in their learning. Giving students choice about what to study is a powerful tool to ignite individual passions and deepen students' connections to school. This is especially true in content areas where learning goals pertain to skills of communication, critical thinking, and creativity.

2. **Devices**: How can devices take consumers of information and turn them into creators of content with a robust range of technological skills? How can they be used to advance equity and avoid a digital divide? What can be done with devices to ensure that they are not mere fancy tools, but assets that enhance and elevate meaningful learning? Per Salem, these are questions to ask when deciding how to incorporate devices into a school, including meeting funding goals. And this decision is best made collaboratively, with input from staff, students, parents, and the community.

3. **Technology**: What online tools or apps can be used to track each student's progress towards goals, as well as facilitate communication with all stakeholders in a student's learning? Salem quickly learned that it's unlikely that one learning management system (LMS) would suit the needs of all schools. One of the tactics they used to empower and encourage schools to think deeply about their LMS needs and potential was to pay teachers to build their own resources in Google Classroom. The result was, ultimately, a cost effective collaboration that advanced the technology skills of those teachers who participated. They were able to build customizable courses or learning environments based on their individual strengths and the needs and interests of their students.

4. **Professional Learning Communities** (PLCs): When truly personalized learning takes place, the boundaries of content areas and grade levels begin to blur. Honing the skills to instruct in increasingly amorphous and fluid settings is a significant shift from the industrial model. Teachers need several opportunities to share ideas, practice their craft, and adapt it to meet changing needs. Salem understands that PLCs open up channels and frequency of professional growth and allow more flexibility as to when and how teachers learn and develop. What's key, per Salem, is that teachers divorce themselves from the old way of thinking about PLCs, where they stick with their content area and grade level peers. Instead, teachers engage in PLCs that run the gamut of disciplines and grades and that focus on how to provide a more personalized learning experience

5. **Problem Based Learning** (PBL): Salem takes project-based learning to a new level by rooting them in problems. Salem understands that workers in this century are often charged with solving complex problems. Thus, they believe they must make problem solvers of all of their students. One of the ways to engage students in this high-level work is to allow them to design projects that draw from their personal interests and passions, rather than from an over reliance on teacher-designed projects. At Salem, teachers strive to make learning personal and relevant to the real world, either in skill development and/or in topic, while supporting mastery of all essential standards along the way.

6. **Standards-Based Learning & Grading**: Last but not least is the area of personalized learning that Salem is currently focused on developing. Salem understands that the traditional approaches to grading will not survive the demise of the industrial model of education. Strict letter grades cannot be neatly or rationally applied to an interdisciplinary, problem-based learning model. Instead, mastery of essential competencies must become the primary indicator of learning. As Salem set out to innovate a standards-based grading system, they realized that assessment is foundational to ensuring learning and mastery are taking place. If we are to ascertain mastery, we must constantly measure each student's path to it. It is in knowing where a

student is relative to mastery that we can further personalize learning and intervene as needed to make sure no student deviates from course or falls through the cracks. Salem calls this move from assessment for grading to *assessment FOR learning.* The process of undertaking such a massive shift is one of trial and error and is likely subject to local policy evolution as traditional grading practices continue to break down.

When offering counsel to other districts or schools on how to transform their education model, Salem acknowledges it can feel like an overwhelming task. After all, the mosaic demands considerations that address every area of our school operations. They understand that no district will have all the pieces needed at the outset and that the pieces available will be unique and varied. It's an iterative process that requires a plan and patience.

When stuck in analysis paralysis or a state of overwhelm, Salem's leadership suggests breaking the problem down into smaller parts and then starting with one manageable initiative in particular: descriptive feedback. In *Visible Learning*, John Hattie determined descriptive feedback has an effect size of 1.13. For descriptive feedback to have this impact, it must inform rather than evaluate. This means pointing out what the student did well and the corrective measures—as tied to specific goals and learning targets—he or she can take to improve. When assessment becomes more about providing descriptive feedback to ensure that every student learns at a high level instead of filtering and sorting children, it naturally leads to conversations about grading practices. Because of feedback's potential as an impetus for broader change, Salem provided significant support to teachers to practice and improve giving descriptive feedback based on their evaluation of student work.

The Impact

Across all schools in Salem, several indicators show that the measures they've taken to transform their education model have had a meaningful and positive impact. This can be seen in traditional indicators of school improvement, such as the four-year graduation rate, which has steadily increased in the past decade. The rate increased from 86% in 2008 to 97% in 2018, equating to approximately 30 more graduating students per year. This increase was simultaneous to an increase in ELL, SPED, and economically disadvantaged populations. Specifically, their economically disadvantaged population nearly doubled, growing from 843 students in 2008 to 1,464 students in 2018.

The impact of change can also be seen in indicators of access and equity. The district is now 1:1 Chromebook for grades 3-12, which has significantly amplified personalized learning for all students in this segment. In addition, Salem High School received a $1.3 million Upward Bound grant to better serve and make college possible for low-income, first generation, and underrepresented high school students for the next five years.⟦SEP⟧

The district has also made changes to enhance technology and Computer Science learning opportunities for all students as early as kindergarten. In the 2017-18 school year, the district added a full-time position to support the integration of Computer Science standards into all

grade levels. This school year, the high school has increased the number of coding, cyber security, and game design classes for all students.

Several indicators speak to boosted student engagement—both with their schools and their own learning. On October 25, 2017, Salem High School hosted its first ever "It's Your Future Day," where students from all grades participated in specific class-level activities designed to further inform their college and career aspirations. Freshmen participated in the first ever SHS Freshman Conference, which included a motivational speaker and breakout sessions to inspire higher levels of engagement and achievement. Sophomores and juniors took the PSAT (this year, they will also be able to take the ASVAB). To further inform their college and career aspirations, seniors participated in job shadowing, an official college visit, and/or a college field trip to Virginia Western Community College, Virginia Tech, or Jefferson College.

In the 2018-19 school year, Salem added more detailed feedback to its Elementary Progress Reports by including ratings on a series of intended learning outcomes (ILOs) in each subject area. Next year, they will add ILOs to middle school and high school report cards. The addition of ILOs is meant to add specificity around where a student is on his or her progress towards mastery and meeting course standards. These changes are a function of Salem's commitment to share more descriptive feedback with students and parents. The idea is to eclipse the long-held student mindset of "How can I add more points to my grade?" and cultivate a new one of "How can I improve on this specific standard or demonstrate that I now know this?" Salem piloted this program with select groups of students and found it effective in achieving its goal; students involved in the pilot immediately began asking questions about learning and demonstrating learning. In turn, they grew to see themselves as active participants in their learning and wanted to understand what they could do to become stronger learners capable of mastery—not just earning more points. Please see Appendix 2 for an example of the Elementary Progress Report.

Discussion Questions

1. Have we accepted the reality that the industrial model of education is collapsing? If not, what is preventing us from doing so? Are we prepared for the fact that we could soon be in a situation where some outside governing body will change our schools for us?

2. If we are not living in reality and beginning to transform our education delivery model, what are we going to do to galvanize everyone in the district around this cause? Which stakeholders do we need to engage in a campaign to make the need for change known and motivate everyone to embrace it with enthusiasm and faith?

3. Per our district circumstances and student needs, what does a 21st-century learning model look like in all of our schools? How we will define it? How will begin to create it? What's the role of the district and what's the role of each school in this undertaking?

4. What do we need to do to prevent our educators from becoming overwhelmed by the changes we are asking of them? What can we do to inspire them to want to participate

in such important work? How can we keep the focused on the most core goals and get them to understand that unrelated ideas will impede our efforts and not serve what's best for students?

Appendix 1: 2018 - 2024 Plan on a Page

2018-2024 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

SALEM CITY SCHOOLS
LOVE · ENGAGE · INSPIRE

The mission of Salem City Schools is to provide a loving and engaging environment that inspires all children to reach their full potential.

Approved 07/10/18

Teaching and Learning
Children First, Every Child Every Day!

Instruction		Assessment	
"We believe that all students are important and can be successful."		*"We are committed to excellence in all that we do."*	
Desired Outcomes	**Actions**	**Desired Outcomes**	**Actions**

Instruction — Desired Outcomes

1. All students will graduate with a board-approved diploma or its equivalent.
2. All graduates will exhibit college and career readiness by demonstrating proficiency on an industry credential, state licensure exam, and/or a national assessment.
3. The division will ensure that instruction is aligned with intended learner outcomes (ILOs).
4. By 2020, all teachers will record and report grades by learning standard.
5. The division will create and provide a more authentic learning environment and balanced assessment program.
6. The division will provide personalized learning opportunities to students in grades K-12.
7. The division will foster the development of social and emotional skills to ensure that all students attain the skills they need to be successful members of the 21st Century Global Economy.
8. The division will provide and support a variety of IB, AP, elective courses and Career and Technical Education programs at Salem High School and through external educational and business partnerships to ensure that ALL students are engaged in coursework related to areas of individual interest and aptitude.

Instruction — Actions

a. School counselors will identify students with credit deficits and develop plans to promote on-time graduation in grades 9-12.
b. Each school will develop action plans to support students in need of emotional, social, or academic intervention.
c. Develop ILOs for core disciplines in grades K-12 and align progress reports.
d. The division will support and provide professional development that promotes cultural proficiency, personalized learning, authentic assessment, and standards-based learning.
e. By 2022 the division will expand the one student:one device initiative (1:1) to grades 3-12.
f. The division will provide instruction in goal setting to students in grades K-12.
g. The division will adopt and implement a framework to support the development of social and emotional skills that include but are not limited to Habits of Mind, executive functioning, and learner agency.
h. The division will continue its emphasis on student enrollment in IB and AP classes, and courses that are Dual Enrolled through VWCC.

Assessment — Desired Outcomes

1. All students will meet or exceed personalized growth targets.
2. All students will meet or exceed state standards as assessed by the Virginia Standards of Learning Assessment Program.
3. Salem students will exceed the state and national average mean scores on the SAT and ACT annually.
4. The division will expand the development and use of authentic assessments.
5. Students will demonstrate proficiency on assessments and/or industry credentials related to individual post-secondary goals identified in their student selected Career Pathway Plan of Study (CPPS).
6. Division staff will demonstrate increased awareness of the impact of culture on achievement in order to ensure deep equity.

Assessment — Actions

a. The division will expand and support the use of Data Teams at each school to assist administrators and teachers in the use of data to inform instructional practice and improve student achievement.
b. Staff will develop annual goals for the use of formative assessment strategies and descriptive feedback to increase student learning.
c. The division will collect and report PALS data (grades K-2) and MAP data (grades 2-9).
d. The division will administer the PSAT to students in the 10th grade annually and provide professional development to teachers based on PSAT data.
e. Staff development will be provided on the development and use of authentic assessments and performance tasks that reflect individual differences to measure student achievement

Climate and Culture
"We recognize and respect differences among staff and students."

Communication and Community Relations		Safety and Organization Management	
"Student success is a shared responsibility among schools, parents and community partners."		*"Students learn best in a safe and disciplined environment provided by caring and respectful adults."*	
Desired Outcomes	**Actions**	**Desired Outcomes**	**Actions**
1. The division will maintain a 95% approval rating with parents, students, staff, and the community as measured by survey every two years. 2. By 2020, 90% of stakeholders will indicate their satisfaction with the method their child's school uses to report student achievement. 3. The division will communicate the key components associated with Virginia's "Profile of a Graduate". 4. The division will communicate the benefits of cultural proficiency, personalized learning, authentic assessment, assessment for learning and standards-based learning.	a. The division and all schools will utilize a variety of communication strategies to ensure that parents and community stakeholders are provided with timely information regarding school programs and activities. b. The division and all schools will utilize a variety of communication strategies to communicate information related to standards-based grading, personalized learning, authentic assessment, assessment for learning, and cultural proficiency.	1. Staff and students will report that the Salem City School Division provides a safe and disciplined learning environment that promotes learning. 2. The school calendar, transportation schedules, school schedules, and school facilities will reflect the division's emphasis on personalized learning in a modern workplace. 3. By 2020, division salaries will rank first when compared to regional school divisions in each salary range and employment category. 4. The Salem City School Division will provide classroom environments that reflect and value cultural diversity. 5. The division will support students physical and mental well-being during times of acute stress and trauma.	a. All schools will implement Virginia's Tiered Systems of Support. b. The division and all schools will annually review safety and crisis management procedures. c. The division will review research related to school schedules, calendars, and facilities and implement incremental changes to promote student health, well-being, and personalized learning. d. The division will fully implement the recommendation of the 2015 salary study. e. The division will provide programs of support and facilitate contact with community agencies for students and families dealing with trauma.
Career Education		**Technology**	
Desired Outcomes	**Actions**	**Desired Outcomes**	**Actions**
1. Students, parents, and teachers will be familiar with Career Pathway Plans of Study (CPPS). 2. All students in grades 8-12 will select and successfully pursue a Career Pathway Plan of Study to ensure that every student graduates with a diploma and a plan. 3. The division will promote, support and report enrollment in a variety of advanced career-centered learning opportunities. 4. The division will provide parents and students with information related to a variety of post-secondary education and training opportunities related to their areas of interest and aptitude.	a. The division will provide professional development and utilize a variety of communication strategies to provide information related to the use and benefits of Career Pathways b. The division will develop a transportation plan that supports student enrollment in a variety of advanced learning opportunities provided by business, industry, and postsecondary education partners. c. Evaluate and consider changes/updates/additions to Career and Technical Education opportunities. d. Salem High School will communicate and support CCAP and Upward Bound programs.	1. The Salem City School Division will provide the necessary infrastructure, hardware and software to support the division's expansion of personalized learning and the one student:one device digital conversion. 2. The Salem City School Division will provide multiple formal and informal learning opportunities related to online safety and digital citizenship. 3. The division will foster classroom environments that support innovation. 4. The division will support the implementation of technology and Computer Science standards in grades K-12.	a. Staff will be trained in the use of instructional technology to promote student engagement. b. Resources will be allocated for the purchase and maintenance of instructional technology and infrastructure to support its use. c. The division will support the continued development and availability of innovative courses and programs. d. All students will complete a formal program to address digital citizenship and online safety in grades K-6.

Appendix 2: Elementary Progress Report

As of the 2018-19 school year, the Elementary Progress Report includes greater detail as to where a student is in progress towards mastery of specific skills. In the pilot program using these reports with select elementary students, students quickly began to grasp that they are learners capable of developing and mastering skills. This shift in mindset began redirecting the conversation from how to earn points for a grade to how to become proactive learners with agency and responsibility.

City of Salem School Division
West Salem Elementary School
2017-2018 Progress Report - Grade 5

Student:
Homeroom: Nimmo, Stephanie Dawn
Principal: Debbie Carroll

Explanation of Grades
4 - Exceeding/Above Grade Level Standards
3 - Meeting Grade Level Standards
2 - Developing Grade Level Standards
1 - Experiencing Difficulty Meeting Grade Level Standards

Attendance Term	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Days In Session	44	47	42	47
Absent	0	0	0	0
Tardy	0	0	0	0

Comment Marks
STR - Area of Strength
DEV - Developing
CON - Area of Concern

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING SKILLS: Nimmo, Stephanie Dawn	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Makes appropriate choices to complete classwork and other learning tasks	DEV	DEV	DEV	STR
Recognizes that personal actions affect others & changes behavior as needed . . .	DEV	DEV	DEV	STR
Engages willingly in new experiences	DEV	STR	DEV	STR
Persists when faced with challenges & tries new approaches	DEV	STR	STR	STR
Demonstrates active listening	DEV	STR	STR	STR
Engages appropriately in conversations	CON	DEV	DEV	STR
Follows classroom routines & procedures	CON	DEV	DEV	STR
Forms & maintains positive relationships with classmates			DEV	CON
Recognizes ways to support classmates & includes others in activities	CON	CON	DEV	STR
Contributes to group tasks through cooperation & compromise	CON	DEV	DEV	DEV
Shows initiative to work independently			DEV	DEV
Respects the rights, feelings, & property of self and others	CON	DEV	DEV	STR

ENCORE CLASSES	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
ART: Fedison, John	CON	CON	DEV	STR
LIBRARY: Fedison, John	DEV	DEV	STR	STR
MUSIC: Fedison, John	CON	DEV	DEV	DEV
PHYSICAL EDUCATION: Fedison, John	DEV	STR	STR	STR

Student: | Grades: | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4

MATHEMATICS Nimmo, Stephanie Dawn		2.5	3.0	3.0	3.5

AREAS OF CONCERN: 0.0 - 1.9	DEVELOPING: 2.0 - 2.9	AREA OF STRENGTH: 3.0 - 4.0
	Geometry Probability Measurement Charts & Graphs Problem Solving Computation & Estimation Number Sense	Patterns & Algebra

SOCIAL STUDIES Nimmo, Stephanie Dawn		3.0	2.5	3.0	3.5

AREAS OF CONCERN: 0.0 - 1.9	DEVELOPING: 2.0 - 2.9	AREA OF STRENGTH: 3.0 - 4.0
	Geography Civics Economics Social Studies Thinking Primary & Secondary Resources	History

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS Nimmo, Stephanie Dawn		1.5	2.0	3.0	3.0

AREAS OF CONCERN: 0.0 - 1.9	DEVELOPING: 2.0 - 2.9	AREA OF STRENGTH: 3.0 - 4.0
	Oral Communications Writing Grammar & Mechanics Word Study Comprehension Collaboration Research	Uses Texts to Support Conclusions

SCIENCE Basham, Traci		3.5	3.0	2.5	2.0

AREAS OF CONCERN	DEVELOPING: 2.0 - 2.9	AREA OF STRENGTH: 3.0 - 4.0
	Inquiry & Investigations Matter Earth Patterns Living Organisms	Earth & Space Natural Processes

Current Reporting Period Comments:

An excellent narrative on the progress of the student goes in this area. This is where the parent will hopefully pay close attention to the material communicated by the teacher. Robust comments are one of the most important part of a Progress Report. It helps the parent understand how the child is learning and is often times more meaningful than a single letter on a page. Many parents indicate that the Teacher Comments are the part of the progress report that means the most to them.