

**Building on Strength**

**IWCS Five Year Strategic Plan**

**2016-2021**

**Dr. Jim Thornton, Superintendent**

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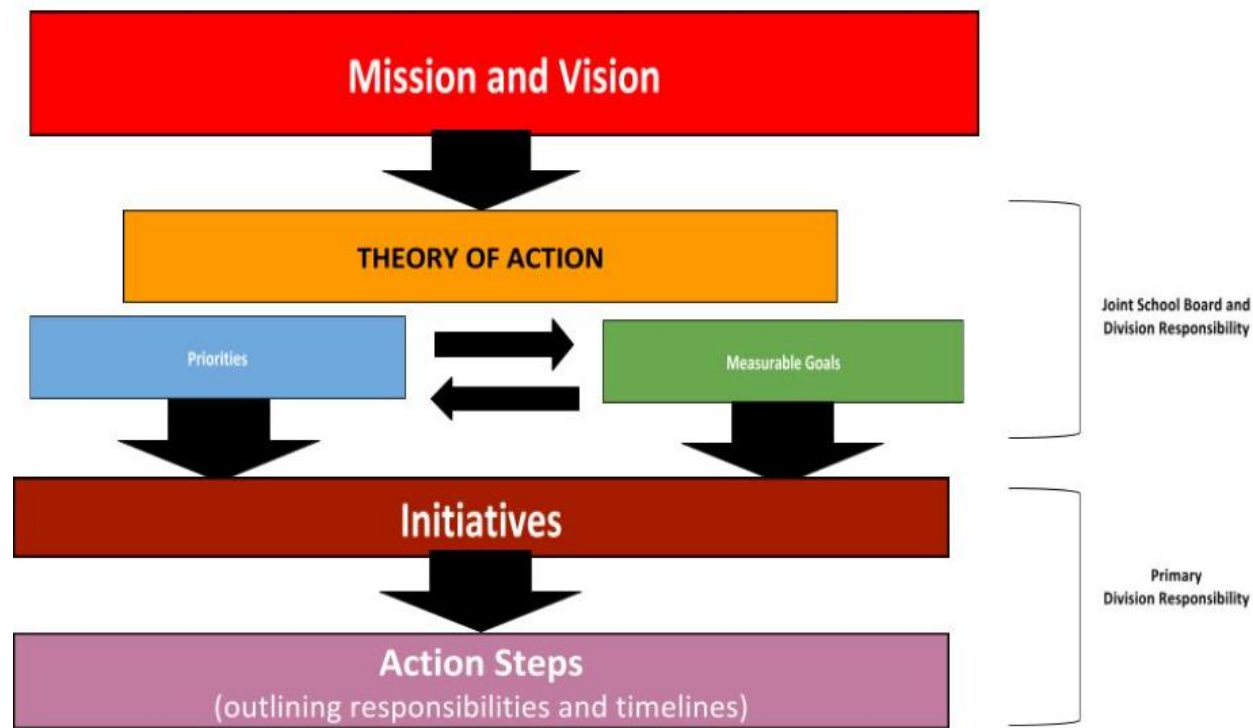
As a result of researching an effective strategic plan design, I have chosen the District Management Council's framework for planning. This framework connects a broad vision for the division with concrete goals and implementation tactics that are aligned and interconnected. Our Theory of Action (TOA), Priorities, and Measurable Goals have been defined after extensive investigation and research. My team and I have had the privilege of visiting over 300 classrooms this past year. We have met with students, parents, school board members, focus groups, community leaders, and community businesses to assist with the development of this strategic plan. Defining the Initiatives and Action Steps are the work of the instructional team and the school level teams. This work is very fluid and takes a great deal of time and thought. Our principals have been developing their school's strategic plan based on the Theory of Action. They have submitted several drafts for review from a committee made up of their fellow principals, assistant principals, and central office instructional team. Each draft has provided greater focus and has ensured that they have a cohesive and actionable plan.

As you review the framework, please keep in mind that the Priorities is a short list of broad thematic areas of focus that will propel the division to achieving its vision and mission. It should be noted that identifying early literacy as a Priority does not mean math is unimportant; rather, this Priority signifies that the division will pay special attention to literacy. Together with the Theory of Action, this Priority says that the school leaders can determine how best to serve their communities, but the division will be providing guidance and support to focus on early literacy.

This draft of the strategic plan is not a "one and done" deal. This document will reflect the changing needs of the division.

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## Strategic Planning Framework



### DEFINITIONS:

**Mission and Vision:** Long-term division aspirations

**Theory of Action:** Fundamental belief about what will lead to long-term success in the division

**Priorities:** Broad areas of focus to support the Theory of Action

**Measurable Goals:** Specific and measurable targets related to division **Priorities**

**Initiatives:** Specific projects related to **Priorities** that help to achieve the **Measurable Goals**

**Action Steps:** An articulation of what steps need to occur, by when, and by whom

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<b>Vision:</b>	To create a learning environment that will enable every child to discover his or her unique gifts and talents.	
<b>Mission:</b>	To enhance and expand on each child's unique gifts and talents to ensure every child is college, career and life ready.	
<b>THEORY OF ACTION</b>	<p><b>If IWCS exposes students to a rigorous curriculum that provides the foundation for entry into any university as well as the world of work:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Schools recognize the value of the integration of projects and the value of all students working together, and</li> <li>● Schools recognize the value of teachers and students given voice and choice as they pursue their interests, and</li> <li>● Schools recognize the value of students connecting their studies to the world beyond school, and</li> <li>● There is ongoing research and design to provide appropriate guidance, support, and accountability from the division office.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Then every student will be able to discover and expand upon his or her unique gifts and talents and have the foundation to be college, career and life ready.</b></p>

<p>Priorities</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The division will focus on literacy, particularly in early grades, to build a strong foundation for academic success across all grade levels.</li> <li>2. The division will articulate common expectations for learning the value of the 5 C's: collaboration, communication, creativity, critical thinking and citizenship</li> <li>3. The division will focus on deeper learning opportunities for all children.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. The division will focus on multiple career pathways and strategies for students.</li> <li>5. The division will focus on enhancing the learning environments in schools.</li> <li>6. The division will equip staff with knowledge and tools necessary to effectively engage with students, families, partners and community.</li> </ol>
<p>Measurable Goals</p>	<p>By 2017, students will create and exhibit work for a variety of wider audiences and venues (presentations of learning, student led parent conferences, and curation of work in schools).</p> <p>By 2018, 90% of students and staff will indicate full knowledge of the 5 C's (survey and informal questioning).</p> <p>By 2018, 90% of students and staff will indicate full knowledge of Citizenship as defined by the Habits of Heart and Mind in each school (survey and informal questioning).</p> <p>By 2019, internships will be created with local businesses in connection with career pathways.</p> <p>By 2020, 100% of students (currently in kindergarten) will be reading on grade level by the end of third grade as measured by IRLA.</p> <p>By 2021, 90% of students will take the PSAT and SAT.</p> <p>By 2021, 90% of school-based staff (principals and teachers) will indicate knowledge and effectively implement deeper learning strategies with students (observations).</p> <p>By 2021, schools will design and expand career and technical opportunities for students (new programs in the unused vocational building [E building] at Smithfield High School, and new programs and a working farm at Windsor High School).</p>	

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	<p>By 2021, IWCS will close the achievement gap by 10% between subgroups and the overall pass rate.</p> <p>By 2021, all students will have access to maker spaces, music studios, green rooms and a variety of learning spaces. Five grade levels will receive new furniture to support a collaborative learning environment. All high school students will have laptops to take home and utilize in class daily.</p>
<p>Initiatives</p>	<p>Priorities and their Initiatives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The division will focus on literacy, particularly in early grades, to build a strong foundation for academic success across all grade levels. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. By September 2016, the division will implement the new comprehensive literacy program from American Reading Company that was researched by the elementary instructional team and teachers throughout the division.</li> <li>b. In the Fall 2016, the division will implement the new reading program and incorporate an activity in which students in kindergarten, first and second grades will “Read Across Isle of Wight County.”</li> <li>c. In Spring 2017, schools will use <i>One Book, One School</i> as a program designed to create a shared reading experience with a single elementary school community. A chapter book will be chosen, every family in the elementary school will receive a copy, and every family will read that book at home over the course of a single month. Activities at school will coordinate, promote, and enrich the shared learning experience.</li> </ol> </li>   <li>2. The division will articulate common expectations for learning that value the 5 C’s: collaboration, communication, creativity, critical thinking and citizenship <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. By September 2016, all schools will develop and implement lesson plans with the 5 C’s and the Habits of Heart and Mind.</li> <li>b. By September 2018, schools will more fully integrate social workers into the student support infrastructure and be given the tools and training needed to continue as a valuable asset in supporting the success of our students.</li> <li>c. Schools will implement advisory groups during the school day to promote a culture of shared beliefs and give students a sense of belonging. Teachers will engage students in team building activities that foster and promote the 5 C's with a strong emphasis on citizenship.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

3. The division will focus on deeper learning opportunities for all children.
  - a. By September 2016, high schools will implement the Agile Mind programs into their math and science curriculum.
  - b. Throughout the school year starting in September 2016, instructional coaches and teachers who attended the summer training will implement deeper learning opportunities through a project based approach.
  - c. By January 2017, the division will develop plans for a working farm behind Windsor Elementary School.
  
4. The division will focus on multiple strategies for students to successfully complete a variety of graduation and career pathways.
  - a. By September 2016, the division will implement a Certified Nursing Assistant program at Smithfield High School and expand the Agriculture program at Windsor High School.
  - b. By January 2017, instructional staff will develop plans for the welding program, culinary arts program, HVAC program, warehousing program and makerspace for SHS E Building.
  - c. By January 2017, the division will partner with Paul D. Camp Community College to offer an Associate's Degree program utilizing dual enrollment courses.
  - d. By June 2018, school leaders, in conjunction with guidance counselors, will establish partnerships with area employers to increase awareness, skill building, internships, apprenticeships and employment opportunities.
  - e. By June 2018, schools, in conjunction with the instructional department, will provide training for guidance counselors on school counseling best practices, as well as on future careers in order to properly advise students in planning for their future.
  - f. By September 2019, the division will create a plan so that UpLift Academy will accommodate all students who may benefit from a very different learning structure by providing a variety of programs, including credit recovery, GED preparation, online courses, and support for students assigned to the center due to disciplinary infractions.
  - g. By September 2019, the division will raise the achievement of students with special needs, and all struggling learners, through implementation of best practices, including service delivery models and staffing alignment.

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>5. The division will focus on enhancing the learning environments in schools.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. By January 2017, the division will conduct a capital improvement facility study that addresses population growth.</li><li>b. By January 2017, the division will develop a compensation plan that considers all positions.</li><li>c. By January 2017, the division will implement twice-monthly pay for employees.</li></ul></li><br/><li>6. The division will equip staff with knowledge and tools necessary to effectively engage with students, families, partners, and community.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. By September 2016, the division will place Instructional Coaches in each school to continue the professional development training started this summer and to work one-on-one with teachers who have been trained in project based learning.</li><li>b. By January 2017, instructional leaders at the division level will evaluate principals based on the skills and competencies of an effective principal, as identified through Virginia Department of Education standards.</li><li>c. By September 2017, the division will implement training for school leaders on how to engage teachers, support staff and students through the creation of robust and constructive Professional Learning Communities (PLC's).</li><li>d. By September 2017, building administrators will evaluate teachers with various methods such as formal and informal classroom observations that will be followed-up with reflective and constructive feedback designed to improve and enhance instructional quality.</li></ul></li></ul> |
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Topics for Future Review include, but are not limited to,:

- Assessments
- Grading
- Student-led conferences
- Creative scheduling



<p>Action Steps</p>	<p>Train reading specialists on coaching techniques (on-going). To be completed by August 2016.</p> <p>Train teachers, reading specialists, and principals in new literacy program (on-going). To be completed in August and September 2016.</p> <p>Train instructional coaches on coaching techniques (on-going). To be completed in August 2016.</p> <p>Instructional coaches train teachers in deeper learning; conduct project tunings, and work day to day alongside teachers to assist with implementing projects, field experiences, and lesson planning. To be completed throughout the school year.</p> <p>Schools host presentations of learning (Expos) to give students an opportunity to present and display their work. To be completed in the fall 2016 and spring 2017 semesters.</p> <p>Train the remaining staff in deeper learning (on-going). To be completed June 2017 and August 2017.</p> <p>Initiate drawings, bids, and construction for spaces related to the new Career and Technical Education spaces. To be completed September 2017.</p> <p>Meet with local businesses to develop possible internships for students. To be completed January 2018.</p> <p>Meet with all employee groups and develop a long term compensation and benefits plan. To be completed by January 2017.</p>
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# The Six Major Priorities of the Five Year Strategic Plan

## Priority 1:

### Focus on Literacy: A Strong Foundation

The first priority speaks to high standards and expectations, ensuring that each individual student has access to outstanding classroom instruction in reading. Priority one also addresses the importance of beginning each student's academic life with a strong foundation and how the division can help contribute to developing the whole child. Special attention will be directed to supporting high need areas and ensuring that each child receives strong student supports.

The division selected American Reading Company's core literacy program for kindergarten, first and second grades. This is a student-centered comprehensive program that engages students in units of study that are aligned to the Virginia standards. These units of study allow students to engage in extensive research projects as well as a variety of writing styles. Students will read a wide variety of authentic texts daily including independent reading, shared reading and above grade level read-alouds. The ARC program also provides a formative assessment framework that allows teachers to establish a baseline for every student, followed by an action plan for each student and a progress monitoring tool to follow progress towards goal. In addition, ARC provides a strong parent component in which parents read nightly with their students and practice recommended skills. Finally, teachers, school reading coaches, and administrators will receive extensive professional development and ongoing coaching provided by school-based ARC coaches and well as the ARC district coach. Through our partnership with American Reading Company, the division shows its commitment to early literacy and providing students with the tools necessary for success in college, career and life.

## Priority 2:

### Focus on the 5 C's: Emphasis on Life Skills

The second priority focuses on a school culture that values life skills such as: collaboration, communication, creativity, critical thinking, and citizenship. The school division will value student and teacher voice and choice. Teachers will employ a variety of approaches to meet diverse learners, and recognize the value of all students working together.

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### Priority 3:

#### Focus on Deeper Learning:

Priority three focuses on a rigorous curriculum that provides the integration of projects, the merging of academic disciplines and performance based assessments. Students will develop projects, solve problems and present their findings to a wider audience.

### Priority 4:

#### Focus on Career Pathways: Adult World Connections

The purpose of Career and Technical Education is to help empower students effectively participate in a global society. CTE programs are designed to contribute to the broad academic achievement of all students by demonstrating the relevance of academic content through real world application. The division's CTE program will be rigorous, relevant, project-based and focused on preparing students for both post-secondary education and career offerings. Isle of Wight County Schools will periodically evaluate the current course visionary to provide the skills, training, and knowledge that students will need to compete in a global economy. Adjustments will made to programs based on the evolving job market and student demand.

### Priority 5:

#### Focus on Learning Environments: Infrastructure

Priority five addresses the infrastructure necessary to enable and support a culture of excellence, including the effective management of financial resources that will be essential to achieving our educational goals. The division will leverage its assets and resources to operate efficiently, effectively and professionally, and to ensure a safe, healthy, inviting learning environment for all students. We will also base our actions on sound data and accurate, relevant information.

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## Priority 6:

### Focus on Staff: Engaged Students, Families & Community Partners

Priority six is focused on ensuring that there is an outstanding teacher in each of our classrooms and a highly effective leader at the helm of each of our schools. In addition, priority six incorporates the role of students, parents and the community in achieving our vision. School success translates into increased tax revenues, real estate values and community satisfaction.

The division must recruit, select, induct, develop, support, promote, compensate and retain personnel with a focus on quality and instructional excellence. Appropriate support will be provided to teachers and principals in order for them to effectively do their jobs.

The division acknowledges that these stakeholders are important players in supporting the education of all students and that we must build family educational efficacy and coordinate focused partnerships in order to make that happen. The division plans to fully implement initiatives effectively with parents and the community in order to engage them in the daily lives of students.

Collaborative partnerships with the community, including universities, businesses, parent associations, governmental entities, community groups and nonprofits will help us achieve the comprehensive initiatives set out in this plan.

## Why do we need a strategic plan?

**Isle of Wight County Schools enjoys a strong history and proud tradition of academic success.** We will continue to build on this foundation but also accept that we can do better, and indeed, we must change to meet the new standards. This strategic plan is designed to achieve the mission for Isle of Wight County Schools. It focuses on six key priorities with accountability attached to all activities.

All of the subsequent plans that are developed to implement this plan must also focus on these key areas, with the ultimate goal of preparing students to leave high school ready for a variety of post-secondary opportunities: for college, for career, for life. All initiatives and actions by Isle of Wight County Schools should drive to this goal. We will develop an overarching metric to measure progress toward this goal.

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With a staff of over 700 - including 452 certified and 255 support staff – and a student body of 5,400 students, it is imperative that we adopt a plan to strategically allocate and use our resources to positively impact student learning and reach our targets.

## **How will parents be supported through this plan?**

The Isle of Wight County Schools, students, parents and extended families must partner in the education of our children. Schools and educators cannot do it alone. It is the obligation of the school division to provide parents with opportunities and tools to be meaningfully engaged in the education of their children.

Specifically, parents will be guided through the system, informed about academic requirements and supported through certain transitions in their child’s educational experience. We will provide a resource document made accessible at every school and on the website with grade-specific requirements and expectations for parents.

The division will continue and strengthen the Parent Advisory Committee to nurture a school culture dedicated to enhancing family engagement in education. To bridge the gap between parents and schools, the school division will provide professional development opportunities to explore methods of developing parent and staff relationships. The division will also create a family and community engagement function within the central office to provide focus and direction to this important work.

## **How can the community support this plan?**

Just as students and parents are critical collaborators in our educational efforts, community partners, businesses, higher education institutions, citizens and taxpayers are important players in supporting our instructional efforts. Local businesses will become a vital part of our strategic plan as internships become integral to our students’ experience in the future.

The division will examine the viability and possible implementation of a centralized system to coordinate with local businesses, community, organizations or nonprofit organizations to identify volunteer opportunities in schools, and to situate qualified volunteers in schools to meet needs identified by the school or the school division. This will be a user-friendly system that places the right person in the right place to best help students and teachers.

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Together, the community and the school division must coordinate its partnerships and provide direction to achieve the maximum return on each investment in our schools. The Isle of Wight Education Foundation Partnership will continue as a local education fund focused on education improvement. The ultimate benefit to the community will be a skilled and knowledgeable workforce prepared for a variety of post-secondary opportunities.

## How will we measure progress?

Accountability measures will be tracked annually, monthly, weekly and sometimes daily. The school division will expand its use and management of data to inform its decisions and review results in all aspects of instruction and operations. To measure the progress and performance of the school division in meeting the goals of this strategic plan, a series of performance targets will be developed. Measuring division-wide performance against these outcome targets will be the primary means of evaluating our success.

At a more granular level, to gauge the efficacy of our efforts in achieving each “Strategic Priority” explained in the plan, we have identified and will monitor a variety of indicators signaling individual student progress, program effectiveness, cost justification, and other valuable assessments of our work. Indicators have been separated into two groups: performance and context. Performance indicators show how we have in fact performed. Context indicators give us detail about the environment or situation related to the performance of a particular specific initiative.

The following are examples of both types of indicators:

### *Common Performance Indicators*

- Student performance scores (SOLs, SATs, CRCs, etc.)
- Various survey results
- Student attendance
- Student discipline rates
- Post-secondary enrollment
- Teacher retention

### *Common Context Indicators*

- Internship numbers
- Teacher attendance
- Resource allocations
- Student demographics
- Student interventions received
- Volunteer activity

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## **How are we using our resources wisely?**

Isle of Wight County Schools is committed to maximizing the resources we have and ensuring that every dollar spent supports student academic development and achievement. We plan to create and use a school level operating cost model during the annual budgeting process and, in the near future, develop “cost-center accounting” that will enable us to determine the costs incurred in the operation of each of our schools. We will then evaluate the alignment of resources with instructional processes, and the efficiency of school operations based upon academic outcomes. At that point, we will be able to identify and provide for the unique needs of each school.

Isle of Wight County Schools also plans to re-tool our human resources operation to maximize efficiency and provide a high level of professional support. Similarly, we will improve administrative and operational functions and processes throughout the division for greater productivity and efficiency, and to better enable and support student learning.

## **There is a lot in this plan. Are we adding to teachers’ workloads?**

We expect to accomplish many great things through this plan, including many activities intended to reduce the workload of our staff and instead allow them to focus on their most central concern: student learning. Over the next year, for instance, teachers will have access to data and information in a quicker and more useable manner than ever before, which will allow them to more effectively teach their students. Undoubtedly, teachers will be challenged in the coming years due to higher state standards and raised expectations for student achievement. The division is committed to providing additional supports to teachers to enable them to continually improve their skills and ultimately prepare students for life beyond the classroom.

## **This is an ambitious plan – how and when are you going to do all of this?**

We do not expect to accomplish all of these goals and activities in the first year of this plan. We have been careful to prioritize issues in year one and have distributed the remaining important tasks throughout the following four years. Department and school plans must be developed to include tactical elements to bring this division plan to life, including resources required, lead persons accountable and timelines. Budget planning will reflect our priorities in this strategic plan.

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## Extra-curricular activities and the arts are important to a successful curriculum. Where do they fit into the plan?

We recognize that students become more actively engaged when they are challenged with activities that broaden their horizons and stretch their creative and leadership capabilities. Students' best prepared to focus on new challenges and innovation will be the leaders of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The school division will continue to provide and expand access to a wide variety of developmental outlets such as athletics, JROTC, art and music.

## Strategic Plan Information

Please visit: [www.iwcs.k12.va.us](http://www.iwcs.k12.va.us) to view the plan.

Email us your feedback at: [strategicplan@iwcs.k12.va.us](mailto:strategicplan@iwcs.k12.va.us)

Or send a letter to: Strategic Plan Feedback  
Isle of Wight County Schools  
820 West Main St.  
Smithfield, VA 23430

## How to Make Your Voice Heard

- Get involved with your local school's PTA.
- Sign up to work with teachers and students needing your expertise in science, technology, engineering, math, etc.
- Attend open houses, school board meetings and other school or division forums.
- Mentor students through a variety of community organizations.

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## IWCS Staff

Dr. Jim Thornton, Superintendent

Heather Tuck, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction

Michael Lombardo, Executive Director for Innovative Learning

Susan Goetz, Executive Director for Elementary Education

Mark Mabey, Executive Director for Secondary Education

Cheryl Elliott, Executive Director of Human Resources

Thomas Chelgren, Director of Special Education

Eric Coopridger, Director of Information Technology

Lynn Briggs, Director of Gifted Services, Community and Media Relations

Rachel Yates, Director of Budget and Finance

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