



Student Response Team (SRT): *Evaluation Readiness Report*

By Allison M. Bock, Ph.D., Program Evaluation Specialist and
Heidi L. Janicki, Ph.D., Director of Research and Evaluation

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this Evaluation Readiness Report is to comply with School Board Policy 6-26, adopted by the School Board of the City of Virginia Beach on September 5, 2007. According to the policy, “Existing programs will be evaluated based on an annual Program Evaluation Schedule which will be developed by the Program Evaluation Committee and approved by the School Board annually.” On September 6, 2017, the School Board approved the 2017-2018 Program Evaluation Schedule in which the Student Response Team (SRT) initiative was recommended for an Evaluation Readiness Report. Based on School Board Policy 6-26, for initiatives scheduled for an Evaluation Readiness Report, the Department of Planning, Innovation, and Accountability (PIA) will “assist program staff in defining measurable goals and objectives, as well as linkages with activities and outcomes.” According to the policy, an Evaluation Readiness Report focusing on the outcomes of this process and recommendations regarding continued evaluation of the program will be presented to the Superintendent and School Board.

Results of the Evaluation Readiness Process

- The purpose of the SRT initiative is to assist students in being successful in the general education classroom through developing and monitoring interventions for students in need in the areas of academics, attendance, and behavior.
- Measurable goals and objectives focused on SRT implementation and student outcomes were developed based on a review of the Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS) SRT school guide and input from the SRT Evaluation Readiness Committee.
- The first implementation goal is that multidisciplinary SRTs, led by an SRT administrator, will collaborate during the SRT process to meet students’ needs. Specific objectives related to the first implementation goal include the following:
 - Staff are able to identify the SRT administrator.
 - Staff collaborate prior to referring a student to the SRT.
 - SRT members vary based on the needs of the students.
 - All SRT members provide input to develop interventions.
 - Students are considered and included throughout the SRT process.
 - Parents of students involved with SRT understand the purpose of the SRT, are encouraged to attend meetings, and know where to find resources.
- The second implementation goal is that data will be monitored and reviewed throughout the SRT process. Specific objectives related to the second implementation goal include the following:
 - Teachers collect and analyze data prior to referring a student to the SRT.
 - Students are referred to the SRT when data show that concerns have not been resolved.
 - Measurable goals and outcomes are monitored using data that are individualized for each student and aligned with the intervention.
 - Data are collected at least weekly when monitoring students’ progress.
 - SRTs use referral information and pre- and postreferral monitoring data to make decisions regarding appropriate interventions.
 - Each school consistently uses established indicators for when to refer students to the SRT and a method for monitoring progress of interventions.
- The third implementation goal is that specific strategies and interventions related to the area of concern (e.g., academic, behavioral, attendance) will be implemented as part of the SRT process. Specific objectives related to the third implementation goal include the following:
 - Teachers implement a strategy or intervention prior to referring a student to the SRT.

- The SRT develops individualized, research-based intervention plans for each student during the initial SRT meeting.
- Interventions are classified as Tier 2 or Tier 3 levels of support.
- The fourth implementation goal is that professional learning opportunities will provide administrators and teachers with effective support and information to successfully implement the SRT initiative. Specific objectives related to the fourth implementation goal include the following:
 - School staff understand the purpose of the SRT and when and how to refer students.
 - School staff understand potential interventions and strategies that could be implemented.
 - Teachers involved with SRT understand how to implement appropriate strategies or interventions and monitor data.
- The student outcome goal is that students served through the SRT process will demonstrate improvement within the referred area of concern (i.e., academics, behavior, and/or attendance). Specific objectives related to the student outcomes goal include the following:
 - Students referred to the SRT for academics demonstrate an improvement in academic performance.
 - Students referred to the SRT for behavior demonstrate a decrease in behavior problems.
 - Students referred to the SRT for attendance demonstrate an increase in attendance.
 - All students referred to the SRT develop learning strategies to be successful in the classroom.
- Given the scope of the evaluation, the current stage of implementation across the division, and input from the committee, the Office of Research and Evaluation recommends that the evaluation be completed over a period of two years with the first year focused on implementation and the second year focused on student outcomes.
- The evaluation plan includes evaluation questions focused on the following: SRT operational components, the characteristics of students referred to and served by the SRT, and progress towards meeting goals and objectives. Other evaluation questions address stakeholder perceptions and cost.

Recommendations and Rationale

Recommendation #1: Conduct an implementation evaluation of the SRT initiative during the 2018-2019 school year with a report provided to the School Board during fall 2019. (Responsible Group: Department of Planning, Innovation, and Accountability)

Rationale: It is proposed that an implementation evaluation of the SRT process be conducted during 2018-2019 to focus on the consistency and fidelity of the implementation of SRT across the division. Conducting an evaluation that focuses first on implementation aligns with the research cited by Hanover Research and similar program evaluations which suggests that ensuring fidelity of implementation should be considered prior to evaluating a program's effectiveness in meeting outcome goals. The implementation evaluation will examine the operation of the initiative along with providing data for goals and objectives related to how the SRT initiative operates. Baseline data for student outcomes will also be collected. Having completed the evaluation readiness process, which resulted in the development and refinement of specific goals and objectives, an implementation evaluation is now recommended.

Recommendation #2: Conduct an outcome evaluation of the SRT initiative during the 2019-2020 school year with a report provided to the School Board during fall 2020. (Responsible Group: Department of Planning, Innovation, and Accountability)

Rationale: It is proposed that an outcome evaluation for SRT be conducted during 2019-2020 to focus on the students who were served by the SRT. Conducting an evaluation that focuses on student outcomes after considering the implementation fidelity aligns with the research cited by Hanover Research and similar program evaluations that suggests that the SRT process will be most effective when there is adherence to an implementation framework. The outcome evaluation will provide information on the operation of the initiative along with providing evaluation data for goals and objectives focused on student outcomes.

Background

Program Description and Purpose

The Student Response Team (SRT) initiative was launched in VBCPS during the 2016-2017 school year. The SRT Initiative grew from the Student Support Team (SST) Initiative, which was first developed by the Office of Programs for Exceptional Children in 2007 as a way to streamline the Student Support Team process.¹ The purpose of the current SRT Initiative was broadened to involve “assisting students in being successful in the general education classroom”² through developing and monitoring interventions for students in need to promote improvement in students’ behavior, attendance, or academic performance. The adjustments from SST to SRT was in support of the *Compass to 2020* Goal 1: High Academic Expectations, emphasizing the need for all students to be challenged and supported, and Goal 3: Social-Emotional Development, emphasizing the need to refine the focus of support teams to include behavior.

The SRT process involves developing and monitoring interventions for students in need. This process is facilitated by collaboration between staff from multiple disciplines, using data to make decisions, and providing multitiered systems of support. The use of multitiered systems of support within the SRT process is based on the Response to Intervention (RTI) framework, which involves providing appropriate levels of support based on students’ needs within a tiered system. Within this framework, the first tier of support (Tier 1) involves support for all students at the classroom level. This level of support is expected to meet the needs of approximately 80 percent of the student population. If students are unable to be successful with Tier 1 supports only, additional supports at upper level tiers can be provided. Tier 2 level of support involves targeted instruction for students who need additional support provided within small groups. It is expected that approximately 15-20 percent of the student population need this level of support to be successful. If students continue to be unsuccessful with Tier 1 and Tier 2 levels of support, Tier 3 level of support may also be provided. Tier 3 includes support for students on an individual basis. Approximately 1-5 percent of the student population are expected to need this level of support. The SRT process involves implementing effective Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions for students in need with the ultimate goal of “gradually releasing students from upper tier supports.”³ Therefore, successful interventions at these upper tiers of support

will allow students to ultimately be successful with only Tier 1 level of support (in the classroom).

Student Identification for Referral

The SRT process begins when teachers or staff members are concerned about a student who is struggling to meet academic, attendance, or behavioral expectations and the student has demonstrated a behavior or skill deficit that has been interfering with academic progress. Generally, screening and assessments should be used to identify these students who need additional support. Each school is expected to consistently use established indicators and processes for when and how to refer students to the SRT. An important aspect of the SRT process is that a classroom-level (Tier 1) intervention must be attempted prior to referring a student to the SRT, and there must be evidence that the student’s needs are still not being met.

A student can be referred to the SRT by any staff member who has a concern (e.g., teacher, group of teachers or team, school counselor, specialist, administrator) or the student’s parent/guardian or outside agency. The referral process involves the staff member detailing the challenges being observed, identified areas of strength and concerns, and attempted interventions. Upon referral to the SRT, information may also be collected from the parents and nonreferring teachers to help provide more detail. An initial meeting of the SRT is then held to discuss areas of concern and current behaviors in these areas with the ultimate goal of planning for interventions to address these areas.

SRT Composition and Collaboration

Reflected in the composition of the SRTs, a major component of the SRT process is collaboration amongst staff who represent multiple disciplines (e.g., teacher, school social worker, school nurse, reading specialist). The composition of the team for any given student should depend on the needs of that student. The Responding to Student Needs school guide provides recommendations on team compositions given academic, behavioral, or attendance concerns (see Appendix A). For example, for attendance concerns, it is recommended to include the administrator, teacher, parent/guardian, student, school social worker, school counselor, and school nurse. However, the team composition is at the discretion of the SRT administrator, who leads the SRT at each school site. During the 2017-2018 school year, it was

advised that the SRT administrator be an assistant principal.

It is recommended that parents/guardians and the referred students also be part of the SRT. Parents/guardians should be involved throughout the process and encouraged to attend meetings. If unable to attend, it is expected that parents/guardians be informed about the meetings and be provided an update about what was discussed. As part of the initial meeting, the SRT is expected to create a plan about how to share meeting information with the student's parent/guardian.⁴ The student's voice must also be considered and included throughout the process depending upon the student's age and developmental capacity.

Collaboration amongst the appropriate staff generally involves discussion of strategies to address student needs even prior to referring a student to the SRT process. Once a student is referred, SRT members formally meet to discuss the topics previously mentioned, including students' referral information, strengths and weaknesses, and prior interventions. During initial and follow-up meetings, SRT's members are expected to provide input to develop interventions and to develop a plan to monitor data to assess progress.

Intervention Selection

Appropriate strategies and interventions planned by the SRT to help address students' needs should be at Tier 2 or Tier 3 levels of support. All strategies and interventions should be individualized to meet the student's areas of need. During the planning process, SRT members should first set SMART goals that are specific, measureable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound. These goals should be specific to the student's needs. Then, interventions should focus specifically on working toward these SMART goals.

During the initial meeting when the SRT plans strategies and interventions, detailed plans should be established. This includes detailing the particulars of the intervention with the series of specific steps that are involved as well as when and where the intervention will be implemented and who will be involved.

It is expected that strategies and interventions planned by the SRT are based on research. Through professional learning from the Office of Student Support Services, resources have been provided to SRT administrators to inform the process of selecting

interventions and ensuring they are appropriate and research-based. These resources have primarily included 1) Intervention Central, an online resource for academic and behavioral interventions and 2) RTI Success: Proven Tools and Strategies for Schools and Classrooms, a book on the RTI framework.⁵ The SRTs are also encouraged to work with specialists who have expertise in particular content areas (e.g., math specialist, reading specialist, gifted resource teacher, etc.)⁶ to determine appropriate interventions.

Data Monitoring

Throughout the SRT process, decision-making (e.g., when to refer and selecting and adjusting interventions) should be based on student performance data. Therefore, teachers or staff members must ensure that data are being collected to monitor students' performance before and after implementation of interventions. Similar to the intervention plans developed by the SRT, the progress monitoring plan should be individualized for each student and aligned with the interventions being implemented. During SRT meetings, plans should be established regarding how each intervention will be monitored, which includes who is responsible for collecting the data and the method of tracking performance. Throughout the process of monitoring students' progress, data are expected to be collected at least weekly after the implementation of a strategy or intervention. Each school is expected to consistently use an established method for monitoring the progress of interventions.

Staff Professional Learning

Two SRT professional learning topics were provided to staff at the division level during the 2016-2017 school year. In July and August 2016, informational sessions about SRT were provided to administrators, school counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers. These sessions included "A Call to Action" presentation on transitioning from the Student Support Team to Student Response Team.⁷ Additionally, on September 15, 2016, SRTs from each school were provided with professional learning on the data decision-making process.

Prior to the 2017-2018 school year, new school counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers were provided an overview of SRT. Throughout the 2017-2018 school year, professional learning was provided at the division level specifically for assistant principals at each school. On October 29, 2017, a mandatory professional learning session

provided assistant principals an overview of the SRT process and information about attendance interventions. The Department of Professional Growth and Innovation facilitated professional learning through the creation of an assistant principal pathway specific to SRT. Assistant principal pathways provide assistant principals with the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of a topic of interest from a list of topics (e.g., data, special education). Three SRT professional learning opportunities for assistant principals provided through the pathway focused on behavior and academic interventions and putting all of the pieces together. Optional professional learning sessions on these topics were available to assistant principals who were not in this pathway.

Selection and Approval of Program for Evaluation

The Student Response Team initiative was selected and approved for the 2017-2018 Program Evaluation Schedule based on criteria specified in School Board Policy 6-26, adopted by the School Board on September 5, 2007. The following excerpt is from School Board Policy 6-26:

Existing programs will be evaluated based on an annual Program Evaluation Schedule which will be developed by the Program Evaluation Committee and approved by the School Board annually... On a yearly basis, the Program Evaluation Committee will present a list of programs recommended for evaluation to the Superintendent and the School Board. This listing will include the rationale for each recommendation based on an approved set of criteria. All programs will be prioritized for evaluation based on the following factors:

1. Alignment with the school division's strategic plan and School Board goals;
2. Program cost;
3. Program scale;
4. Cross-departmental interest;
5. Community/stakeholder interest in the program;
6. Availability of information on the program's effectiveness; and
7. Date of most recent evaluation.

On July 13, 2017, members of the Program Evaluation Committee reviewed and ranked a list of programs based on the criteria above. Rankings were compiled and shared with the committee at the meeting, and programs recommended for evaluation were

determined. The Student Response Team was selected as the top program for evaluation due to the program operating at all schools and all levels, alignment with the division's strategic plan, no information on the program's effectiveness, and the lack of a formal evaluation by the Office of Research and Evaluation. The final list of programs recommended for evaluation was presented to the School Board on August 15, 2017 and approved on September 6, 2017. The Student Response Team was approved to undergo an evaluation readiness review during the 2017-2018 school year in order to define its goals and identify measurable objectives.

Overview of Current Goals and Objectives

A review of SRT documentation, including the SRT school guide and SRT critical path, revealed three general overarching goals and four objectives specific to the last goal:

1. Assist students in being successful in the general education classroom.
2. Gradually release students from upper tier supports.
3. Students who have gone through the SRT process will have increased academic performance shown by the following school-level outcomes:
 - a. Reduced retention rates
 - b. Reduced school discipline referrals
 - c. Increased attendance rates
 - d. Reduced Special Education Committee (SEC) referrals

The next section of this report describes the process for developing revised goals and objectives. In revising the goals and objectives, the focus was on including the main components of the existing goals and objectives while also addressing other components of the initiative and ensuring outcomes are measurable. The existing objectives related to school-level outcomes were revised due to concerns about the ability to detect changes in school-level outcomes with the relatively low numbers of students being served through the SRT process.

Process for Developing Revised Goals and Objectives

According to School Board Policy 6-26, for programs selected for an Evaluation Readiness Report, PIA will

“assist program staff in defining measurable goals and objectives, as well as linkages with activities and outcomes. An Evaluation Readiness Report focusing on the outcomes of this process and baseline data (if available) will be presented to the Superintendent and School Board” The process to complete the Evaluation Readiness Report began during the 2017-2018 school year with a review of existing documentation for SRT (history, purpose, available goals, 2016-2017 data logs) by program evaluators from the Office of Research and Evaluation.

Before the formation of the SRT Program Evaluation Readiness Committee, a meeting was held with the program manager and the evaluators attended professional learning meetings to gain an overview of the program and gather additional information related to the program. In order to ensure the committee represented a wide array of stakeholders who were involved in implementing the SRT initiative throughout VBCPS, the program manager was asked to suggest school-based personnel, such as assistant principals, social workers, and school psychologists who were familiar with the purpose of the program and who would be interested in assisting in defining divisionwide goals and objectives. In addition to school-based personnel, committee members included representatives from the Department of Student Support Services.

A committee of eight participants was formed to develop goals and measurable objectives for the SRT initiative, as stated in School Board Policy 6-26. Committee members initially met on March 9, 2018 to discuss the evaluation readiness process, the overall evaluation of the SRT initiative, and to begin defining the goals and objectives. The discussion also centered on the proposed scope of the evaluation, including the development of the Evaluation Readiness Report. In order to frame and focus the discussion, committee members were asked two major questions:

- If Student Response Teams were successful, in general, what would success look like?
- If Student Response Teams were successful, what specific outcomes would be expected?

Discussion during the initial meeting also focused on reviewing the available information regarding SRT’s background and purpose and identifying additional components that would provide useful information regarding implementation and student outcomes. Following the initial meeting and review of documents,

goals and specific measurable objectives were developed, which focused on implementation and student outcomes. In addition, wording for each objective states explicitly the manner in which the objective will be measured and evaluated during the evaluation process. In May 2018, committee members received an email asking them to review the drafted goals and measurable objectives and to forward any feedback regarding any needed changes.

A second meeting was held on July 2, 2018 with the program manager to review the draft program goals and measurable objectives and obtain any additional feedback that would be used to evaluate progress toward meeting each goal. No additional feedback regarding the goals was provided; therefore, the drafted goals and objectives were finalized. The implementation goals focused on the SRT collaboration, data monitoring, implementation of interventions, and professional learning. The outcome goal focused on student improvement within the referred area of concern, including academics, attendance, and behavior as well as learning strategies to be successful in the classroom.

Revised Goals and Objectives

As a result of the evaluation readiness process, there were 4 goals and 18 objectives developed for the evaluation of SRT implementation and 1 goal and 4 objectives for the evaluation of SRT student outcomes.

Implementation Goals and Objectives

Goal #1: Multidisciplinary SRTs, led by an SRT administrator, will collaborate during the SRT process to meet students’ needs.

Objective 1: Teachers, staff, and administrators will be able to identify the SRT administrator as measured by teacher, staff, and administrator survey responses.

Objective 2: Staff will collaborate to discuss strategies to address concerns prior to referring a student to the SRT as measured by teacher, staff, and administrator survey responses.

Objective 3: SRT members will vary based on the needs of the students and will represent multiple disciplines (e.g., teacher, school social worker, therapist, reading specialist, etc.) as measured by teacher, staff, and administrator survey responses.

Objective 4: All SRT members will provide input to develop interventions as measured by teacher, staff, and administrator survey responses.

Objective 5: Students will be considered and included throughout the SRT process as measured by student, parent, teacher, staff, and administrator survey responses.

Objective 6: Parents of students involved with the SRT process will understand the purpose of the SRT; be encouraged to attend all meetings; and indicate that they know where to find resources to address various areas of concern as measured by parent, teacher, staff, and administrator survey responses.

Goal #2: Data will be monitored and reviewed throughout the SRT process.

Objective 1: Teachers will collect and analyze data on areas of concern prior to referring a student to the SRT as measured by teacher, staff, and administrator survey responses.

Objective 2: Students will be referred to the SRT when data show that concerns have not been resolved following classroom interventions as measured by teacher, staff, and administrator survey responses.

Objective 3: Measurable goals and outcomes will be monitored using data that are individualized for each student and aligned with the intervention as measured by teacher, staff, and administrator survey responses.

Objective 4: Data will be collected at least weekly when monitoring students' progress after the implementation of a strategy or intervention as measured by teacher, staff, and administrator survey responses.

Objective 5: SRTs will use referral information and pre- and postreferral monitoring data to make decisions regarding appropriate interventions and adjustments to interventions (including adding Tier 3 level supports) as measured by teacher, staff, and administrator survey responses.

Objective 6: Each school will consistently use established indicators for when to refer students to the SRT and an established method for monitoring the progress of interventions as measured by teacher, staff, and administrator survey responses.

Goal #3: Specific strategies and interventions related to the area of concern (e.g., academic, behavioral, attendance) will be implemented as part of the SRT process.

Objective 1: Teachers will implement a strategy or intervention for 4-6 weeks in the classroom prior to referring a student to the SRT as measured by teacher, staff, and administrator survey responses.

Objective 2: The SRT will develop individualized, research-based intervention plans for each student during the initial SRT meeting as measured by teacher, staff, and administrator survey responses.

Objective 3: Interventions utilized by the SRT will be classified as Tier 2 or Tier 3 levels of support as measured by teacher, staff, and administrator survey responses.

Goal #4: Professional learning opportunities will provide administrators and teachers with effective support and information to successfully implement the SRT initiative.

Objective 1: Professional learning will ensure that school staff understand the purpose of the SRT and when and how to refer students as measured by teacher, staff, and administrator survey responses.

Objective 2: Professional learning will ensure that school staff understand potential interventions and strategies that could be implemented to address areas of concern (e.g., academic, behavioral, attendance) and how to select appropriate interventions as measured by teacher, staff, and administrator survey responses.

Objective 3: Professional learning will provide teachers involved with the SRT process with an understanding of how to implement appropriate strategies or interventions and monitor data to ensure that their students' needs are met as measured by teacher, staff, and administrator survey responses.

Student Outcome Goal and Objectives

Goal #1: Students served through the SRT process will demonstrate improvement within the referred area of concern (i.e., academics, behavior, and/or attendance).

Objective 1: Students referred to the SRT for academics will demonstrate an improvement in

academic performance after receiving services as measured by improvement in course grades (i.e., secondary students) or standards-based grades (i.e., elementary students) and by student, parent, teacher, staff, and administrator survey responses.

Objective 2: Students referred to the SRT for behavior will demonstrate a decrease in behavior problems after receiving services as measured by a decline in number of discipline referrals and by student, parent, teacher, staff, and administrator survey responses.

Objective 3: Students referred to the SRT for attendance will demonstrate an increase in attendance after receiving services as measured by a decline in the number of absences (excused and unexcused) and by student, parent, teacher, staff, and administrator survey responses.

Objective 4: Students referred to the SRT will learn strategies to be successful in the classroom as measured by the percentage of students who exit the SRT process by the end of the school year; a low percentage of students with multiple SRT referrals; and student, parent, teacher, staff, and administrator survey responses.

Baseline Data

Student Response Team data logs are submitted by each school to the Office of Student Support Services in the Department of Teaching and Learning. The logs contain student referral information including student identification information, the referral reason and source, date and result of initial meeting, and intervention selected. Schools submit data logs after each quarter, and the program manager reviews schools' data logs for compliance. The program manager contacts the Department of School Leadership each quarter regarding the percentage of schools that submitted data logs. A meeting was held on July 2, 2018 with the program manager to discuss data needs to evaluate the SRT outcome goal. As a result of this discussion, data logs are anticipated to include information regarding the status of the student in the SRT process (e.g., monitoring progress, referral to another service, exited) and an exit date when appropriate.

Data regarding students referred to SRT for the 2017-2018 school year were extracted from the SRT data logs submitted by each school. Data from the

2016-2017 SRT data logs were also analyzed and notable differences are included in text where appropriate. Students referred to SRT were all students included in the data logs. In the following analysis, we focus on students included in the data logs (i.e., those referred to the SRT). For the purposes of the evaluation plan, students served by SRT will be defined as those for whom an intervention was implemented. Additionally, students served by SRT will not include students who were only referred to another service (e.g., special education committee, 504, English as a Second Language). However, because the 2017-2018 data logs do not explicitly note if students were referred to another service, this report does not include the numbers and percentages of students being served by SRT.

During the 2017-2018 school year, 1,898 students were referred to the SRT at their respective schools across 82 schools. Of those 1,898 students referred in 2017-2018, 43 students were referred twice and 4 students were referred three times, which equated to 1,949 referrals. Log entries that were indicated as follow-up meetings were not included. One elementary school indicated there were no SRT referrals for the 2017-2018 school year, and one high school did not submit data logs. There were over 500 more referrals in 2017-2018 than in 2016-2017 when there were 1,443 total referrals.

Table 1 displays the numbers and percentages of total students referred to SRT by school level across the division during the 2017-2018 school year.

Table 1: Number and Percentage of Students Referred to SRT by School Level During the 2017-2018 School Year

Number/Percentage	ES	MS	HS
Number of Students	834	317	747
Percentage of Total Students Referred	43.9%	16.7%	39.4%
Percentage of Total Population ⁸	2.6%	2.0%	3.5%

Table 2 displays the percentages of referrals by referral reason. Referral reasons were coded as being due to academics, attendance, behavior, social-emotional needs, and other (e.g., ESL, medical). If the referral reason was not noted, the intervention column was examined and a referral reason was noted if possible. Within one referral, students may have had more than one referral reason (e.g., referred for both academic

and attendance concerns); therefore, the categories are not mutually exclusive.

Table 2: Percentage of Referrals to SRT by Referral Reason Within School Level During the 2017-2018 School Year

Referral Reason	ES	MS	HS
Academic	67.6%	48.0%	21.6%
Attendance	14.0%	29.5%	66.8%
Behavioral	28.5%	29.5%	5.2%
Social-Emotional	2.5%	2.5%	4.6%
Other	2.6%	10.3%	2.8%
Unknown	0.0%	0.0%	15.7% ⁹

Overall, a higher percentage of elementary and middle school referrals were for academic reasons compared to other reasons, whereas a majority of high school referrals were for attendance reasons. The pattern seen in Table 2 for elementary referrals in 2017-2018 was consistent with elementary referral reasons in 2016-2017. However, there were notable differences for middle and high school referrals. Comparisons across years showed that in 2016-2017, there was a smaller percentage of middle school referrals for academic reasons (38%) and a higher percentage of referrals for behavioral (34%) and other (15%) reasons. For high school referrals, comparisons across years showed that in 2016-2017, there were higher percentages of referrals for academic (61%) and behavioral reasons (15%), whereas there were smaller percentages of referrals for attendance (57%) and unknown reasons (0.5%).

Table 3 displays demographic data for students referred for SRT during the 2017-2018 school year by school level. Data are based on information from the VBCPS data warehouse.¹⁰

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of Students Referred to SRT by School Level During the 2017-2018 School Year

Characteristic	ES N = 831	MS N = 317	HS N = 738
Gender			
Female	36.3%	36.3%	46.6%
Male	63.7%	63.7%	53.4%
Ethnicity			
African American	32.0%	31.2%	37.5%
American Indian	0.4%	0.3%	0.1%
Caucasian	43.2%	37.5%	35.6%
Hispanic	11.8%	16.4%	13.3%
Asian	2.0%	7.3%	3.8%

Characteristic	ES N = 831	MS N = 317	HS N = 738
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.0%	0.7%
Multiracial	10.5%	7.3%	8.9%
Economically Disadvantaged	57.3%	61.2%	56.6%
Identified Special Education	14.2%	8.8%	13.4%
Identified English Learner	2.5%	12.3%	1.6%
Identified Gifted	4.7%	12.0%	7.9%
Military Connected	13.7%	10.7%	8.2%

Across the division, the majority of students referred to SRT were male (60%). At the division level, the majority of students referred to SRT were Caucasian (39%) or African American (34%). At the high school level, there was a slightly higher percentage of African American students referred to SRT than Caucasian students (see Table 3). The majority of students referred to SRT across all levels were economically disadvantaged (58%). At the division level, 13 percent of students referred to SRT were special education students, 4 percent were English learners (EL), and 7 percent were gifted students. At the middle school level, there were higher percentages of referred students who were identified as EL and gifted than at the other levels. All demographic characteristics of students referred in 2017-2018 were similar to students referred in 2016-2017.

Evaluation Plan and Recommendation

According to School Board Policy 6-26, an Evaluation Readiness Report will focus on the outcomes of the evaluation readiness process and “will be presented to the Superintendent and School Board with a recommendation regarding future evaluation plans for the program. If appropriate based on the evaluation readiness process, the program will be scheduled for a comprehensive evaluation.” In accordance with this policy, a proposed plan of action for the evaluation of SRT is described below.

Scope and Rationale of Proposed Evaluation

The scope of the SRT evaluation will include both an assessment of the fidelity of implementation across the division and student outcomes for those served by the SRT process. The first purpose of the evaluation is to address the extent to which components of the SRT process were implemented with fidelity throughout the division in relation to the SRT school guide published by the Office of Student Support Services. This is to ensure that all schools throughout the division are following the procedures outlined by the school guide. The second purpose is to determine the effectiveness of SRT for students who were served by the SRT due to academic, attendance, and/or behavioral concerns. Due to the scope of the evaluation, the Office of Research and Evaluation recommends that the evaluation be completed over a period of two years. The proposed evaluation plan includes the following.

1. Implementation evaluation focused on the SRT's goals and objectives related to implementation at all schools during the 2018-2019 school year.
2. Outcome evaluation focused on the SRT's goal and objectives related to student outcomes for those who were served by the SRT process during the 2019-2020 school year.

Conducting an evaluation that focuses first on the fidelity of implementation across the division follows the recommendation cited by Hanover Research¹¹ and advocated by several evaluations of programs with multitiered systems of support (e.g., RTI, PBIS, MTSS). Two recent studies assessed the effectiveness of divisionwide implementations of an RTI framework. A study assessing a reading RTI framework with elementary school students in a rural district showed no impact of RTI, but that implementation fidelity across the division and within schools reported by administrators was an area for concern.¹² This study stressed the importance of first considering fidelity when evaluating effectiveness. A study of RTI implementation across Milwaukee Public elementary schools involved ratings of fidelity and showed that schools varied greatly in their implementation fidelity rated by an observer.¹³ Approximately half of schools were rated as implementing RTI with adequate fidelity. Further, the implementation fidelity was related to student outcomes. Schools with higher student academic proficiency rates and lower suspension rates showed stronger implementation, which further

supports the importance of ensuring fidelity of implementation prior to evaluating a program's effectiveness in meeting outcome goals.

In addition, the Educational Policy Center at American Institutes for Research (AIR) provided a guide for successful RTI implementation.¹⁴ Steps for divisions to take to ensure success within schools included getting everyone on board, strategically choosing data, and ongoing professional learning. The final step was to evaluate whether there is consistent implementation, which involves ensuring there is fidelity within and across schools. When there is adherence to the framework, the process will be most effective.

For both the implementation and outcome evaluations, information will be provided for the following five areas:

1. Operational Components

➤ Rationale: It is standard practice within an evaluation framework to examine issues related to implementation in order to assess functioning.

2. Characteristics of SRT students

➤ Rationale: The purpose of identifying characteristics of students referred for SRT and going through the SRT process is to better understand the population of students being referred and served.

3. Meeting Goals and Objectives

➤ Rationale: Progress made toward meeting the implementation and/or outcome goals and objectives will be assessed to determine the extent to which the initiative is effective.

4. Stakeholder Perceptions

➤ Rationale: Assessing principal, assistant principal, teacher, SRT members, student, and parent perceptions of the SRT initiative will identify strengths and potential areas for improvement.

5. Cost

➤ Rationale: The additional cost of SRT will be determined in order to provide information about the benefit of the service in relation to its overall cost.

Proposed Evaluation Method

In preparation for this Evaluation Readiness Report, a report was requested from Hanover Research on

strategies for evaluating initiatives similar to SRT.¹⁵ The report provided a resource for planning the evaluation. The proposed evaluation will include mixed-methodology in order to address each of the evaluation questions, including the goals and objectives. Data collection will occur during the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years and include both quantitative (e.g., student demographics, survey ratings, etc.) and qualitative data (e.g., open-ended survey questions). The majority of quantitative data will be extracted from the VBCPS data warehouse, including demographic data, course grades, attendance, and discipline data, and from the SRT Data Logs. Surveys will also be administered to all stakeholder groups (i.e., principals, assistant principals, teachers, SRT members, students, and parents) to gather perception data. Information garnered from SRT documentation surveys will also be utilized in the evaluation.

Evaluation Design and Questions

To the greatest extent possible, the proposed evaluation methods align with information about best practices in the evaluation of programs that utilize multitiered systems of support (e.g., RTI). In particular, the evaluation of student outcomes will focus on students' performance before and after being served by the SRT. This is consistent with a Hanover report suggesting that a change in student-level indicators should be included in an evaluation.¹⁶ Additionally, within a training manual on developing an RTI evaluation plan, the National Center on Response to Intervention indicated that changes in student outcome measures are indicators for RTI effectiveness.¹⁷ In particular, it was noted that when analyzing data within the same year, comparisons can be made between outcomes with the same students.

The proposed evaluation questions that will be addressed in both implementation and outcome evaluations are as follows:

1. **What are the operational components of SRT?**
 - a. What is the selection process for SRT members and who is most often included?

- b. What are the responsibilities of the SRT administrator and the SRT members?
- c. What processes occur before referral to SRT?
- d. How are criteria set for identifying and referring students to SRT?
- e. What does the SRT process involve once the child is referred, including types of meetings held by the SRT?
- f. How are interventions/strategies chosen?
- g. How do schools track and monitor students who are referred to the SRT?
- h. What professional learning opportunities are provided for SRT administrators and team members at the division and school levels?

2. **What are the characteristics of the students referred to and served by SRT?**
 - a. How many students are referred to SRT? How many students are served by SRT?
 - b. What is the average amount of time students take to go through the SRT process?
 - c. What are the demographic characteristics (e.g., grade, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, special education, gifted status) for students who are referred and served by the SRT process?
3. **What progress has been made toward meeting the goals and objectives of SRT?**
4. **What were the stakeholders' perceptions of SRT (i.e., principals, assistant principals, teachers, SRT members, students, and parents)?**
5. **What is the additional cost of SRT to the school division?**

Table 4 and Table 5 outline the process for collecting data to address Evaluation Question 3 noted above. For reference, the goals and objectives can be found beginning on page 10.

Table 4: Data Collection Process for Implementation Objectives

Program Objective	Data Used to Evaluate Progress Toward Meeting Objectives	Measure	Data Source
Goal 1 Objective 1	Data regarding teacher, staff, and administrator identification of SRT administrator at each site.	Identification agreement across respondents by site.	Survey

Program Objective	Data Used to Evaluate Progress Toward Meeting Objectives	Measure	Data Source
Goal 1 Objective 2	Data regarding teacher, staff, and administrator perceptions on staff collaboration to discuss strategies to address concerns prior to referring a student to SRT.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey
Goal 1 Objective 3	Data regarding teacher, staff, and administrator perceptions on SRT members varying based on the needs of the students and representing multiple disciplines.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey
Goal 1 Objective 4	Data regarding teacher, staff, and administrator perceptions on all SRT members providing input to develop interventions.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey
Goal 1 Objective 5	Data regarding student, parent, teacher, staff, and administrator perceptions on students being considered and included throughout the SRT process.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey
Goal 1 Objective 6	Data regarding parent, teacher, staff, and administrator perceptions on parents of students involved with the SRT process understanding the purpose of SRT, being encouraged to attend all meetings, and indicating that they know where to find resources to address various areas of concern.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey
Goal 2 Objective 1	Data regarding teacher, staff, and administrator perceptions on teachers collecting and analyzing data on areas of concern prior to referring a student to the SRT.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey
Goal 2 Objective 2	Data regarding teacher, staff, and administrator perceptions on students being referred to the SRT when data show that concerns have not been resolved following classroom interventions.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey
Goal 2 Objective 3	Data regarding teacher, staff, and administrator perceptions on measurable goals and outcomes being monitored using data that are individualized for each student and aligned with the intervention.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey
Goal 2 Objective 4	Data regarding teacher, staff, and administrator perceptions on data being collected at least weekly when monitoring students' progress after the implementation of a strategy or intervention.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey
Goal 2 Objective 5	Data regarding teacher, staff, and administrator perceptions on SRTs using referral information and pre- and postreferral monitoring data to make decisions regarding appropriate interventions and adjustments to interventions (including adding Tier 3 level supports).	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey
Goal 2 Objective 6	Data regarding teacher, staff, and administrator perceptions on each school consistently using established indicators for when to refer students to the SRT and an established method for monitoring the progress of interventions.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey
Goal 3 Objective 1	Data regarding teacher, staff, and administrator perceptions on teachers implementing a strategy or intervention for 4-6 weeks in the classroom prior to referring a student to the SRT.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey

Program Objective	Data Used to Evaluate Progress Toward Meeting Objectives	Measure	Data Source
Goal 3 Objective 2	Data regarding teacher, staff, and administrator perceptions on the SRT developing individualized, research-based intervention plans for each student during the initial SRT meeting.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey
Goal 3 Objective 3	Data regarding teacher, staff, and administrator perceptions on interventions utilized by the SRT being classified as Tier 2 or Tier 3 levels of support.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey
Goal 4 Objective 1	Data regarding teacher, staff, and administrator perceptions on professional learning ensuring that school staff understand the purpose of the SRT and when and how to refer students.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey
Goal 4 Objective 2	Data regarding teacher, staff, and administrator perceptions on professional learning ensuring that school staff understand potential interventions and strategies that could be implemented to address areas of concern and how to select appropriate interventions.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey
Goal 4 Objective 3	Data regarding teacher, staff, and administrator perceptions on professional learning providing teachers involved with the SRT process with an understanding of how to implement appropriate strategies or interventions and monitor data to ensure that their students' needs are met.	Percentage of respondents agreeing.	Survey

Table 5: Data Collection Process for Student Outcome Objectives

Program Objective	Data Used to Evaluate Progress Toward Meeting Objectives	Measure	Data Source
Goal 1 Objective 1	Student course grades for those referred to the SRT for academics (for elementary: standards-based grades; for secondary: course grades); data regarding student, parent, teacher, staff, and administrator perceptions on students referred to the SRT for academics improving in academic performance after receiving services.	Percentage of students who demonstrated any improvement in grades in core courses/areas; percentage of respondents agreeing.	VBCPS Data Warehouse, Survey
Goal 1 Objective 2	Student discipline data for those referred to SRT for behavior; data regarding student, parent, teacher, staff, and administrator perceptions on students referred to the SRT for behavior demonstrating a decline in behavior problems after receiving services.	Percentage of students with a decline in discipline referrals; percentage of respondents agreeing.	VBCPS Data Warehouse, Survey
Goal 1 Objective 3	Student attendance data for those referred to SRT for attendance; data regarding student, parent, teacher, staff, and administrator perceptions on students referred to the SRT for attendance demonstrating an increase in attendance after receiving services.	Percentage of students with an increase in attendance; percentage of respondents agreeing.	VBCPS Data Warehouse, Survey
Goal 1 Objective 4	Student exit dates from SRT; student SRT referral data; data regarding student, parent, teacher, staff, and administrator perceptions on students referred to the SRT learning strategies to be successful in the classroom.	Percentage of students who exited the SRT process by the end of the school year; percentage of students with multiple SRT referrals; percentage of respondents agreeing.	SRT Data Logs, Survey

Results of the Evaluation Readiness Process

- The purpose of the SRT initiative is to assist students in being successful in the general education classroom through developing and monitoring interventions for students in need in the areas of academics, attendance, and behavior.
- Measurable goals and objectives focused on SRT implementation and student outcomes were developed based on a review of the VBCPS SRT school guide and input from the SRT Evaluation Readiness Committee.
- The first implementation goal is that multidisciplinary SRTs, led by an SRT administrator, will collaborate during the SRT process to meet students' needs. Specific objectives related to the first implementation goal include the following:
 - Staff are able to identify the SRT administrator.
 - Staff collaborate prior to referring a student to the SRT.
 - SRT members vary based on the needs of the students.
 - All SRT members provide input to develop interventions.
 - Students are considered and included throughout the SRT process.
 - Parents of students involved with SRT understand the purpose of the SRT, are encouraged to attend meetings, and know where to find resources.
- The second implementation goal is that data will be monitored and reviewed throughout the SRT process. Specific objectives related to the second implementation goal include the following:
 - Teachers collect and analyze data prior to referring a student to the SRT.
 - Students are referred to the SRT when data show that concerns have not been resolved.
 - Measurable goals and outcomes are monitored using data that are individualized for each student and aligned with the intervention.
 - Data are collected at least weekly when monitoring students' progress.
- SRTs use referral information and pre- and postreferral monitoring data to make decisions regarding appropriate interventions.
- Each school consistently uses established indicators for when to refer students to the SRT and a method for monitoring progress of interventions.
- The third implementation goal is that specific strategies and interventions related to the area of concern (e.g., academic, behavioral, attendance) will be implemented as part of the SRT process. Specific objectives related to the third implementation goal include the following:
 - Teachers implement a strategy or intervention prior to referring a student to the SRT.
 - The SRT develops individualized, research-based intervention plans for each student during the initial SRT meeting.
 - Interventions are classified as Tier 2 or Tier 3 levels of support.
- The fourth implementation goal is that professional learning opportunities will provide administrators and teachers with effective support and information to successfully implement the SRT initiative. Specific objectives related to the fourth implementation goal include the following:
 - School staff understand the purpose of the SRT and when and how to refer students.
 - School staff understand potential interventions and strategies that could be implemented.
 - Teachers involved with SRT understand how to implement appropriate strategies or interventions and monitor data.
- The student outcome goal is that students served through the SRT process will demonstrate improvement within the referred area of concern (i.e., academics, behavior, and/or attendance). Specific objectives related to the student outcomes goal include the following:
 - Students referred to the SRT for academics demonstrate an improvement in academic performance.
 - Students referred to the SRT for behavior demonstrate a decrease in behavior problems.
 - Students referred to the SRT for attendance demonstrate an increase in attendance.

- All students referred to the SRT develop learning strategies to be successful in the classroom.
- Given the scope of the evaluation, the current stage of implementation across the division, and input from the committee, the Office of Research and Evaluation recommends that the evaluation be completed over a period of two years with the first

year focused on implementation and the second year focused on student outcomes.

- The evaluation plan includes evaluation questions focused on the following: SRT operational components, the characteristics of students referred to and served by the SRT, and progress towards meeting goals and objectives. Other evaluation questions address stakeholder perceptions and cost.

Recommendations and Rationale

Recommendation #1: Conduct an implementation evaluation of the SRT initiative during the 2018-2019 school year with a report provided to the School Board during fall 2019. (Responsible Group: Department of Planning, Innovation, and Accountability)

Rationale: It is proposed that an implementation evaluation of the SRT process be conducted during 2018-2019 to focus on the consistency and fidelity of the implementation of SRT across the division. Conducting an evaluation that focuses first on implementation aligns with the research cited by Hanover Research and similar program evaluations which suggests that ensuring fidelity of implementation should be considered prior to evaluating a program's effectiveness in meeting outcome goals. The implementation evaluation will examine the operation of the initiative along with providing data for goals and objectives related to how the SRT initiative operates. Baseline data for student outcomes will also be collected. Having completed the evaluation readiness process, which resulted in the development and refinement of specific goals and objectives, an implementation evaluation is now recommended.

Recommendation #2: Conduct an outcome evaluation of the SRT initiative during the 2019-2020 school year with a report provided to the School Board during fall 2020. (Responsible Group: Department of Planning, Innovation, and Accountability)

Rationale: It is proposed that an outcome evaluation for SRT be conducted during 2019-2020 to focus on the students who were served by the SRT. Conducting an evaluation that focuses on student outcomes after considering the implementation fidelity aligns with the research cited by Hanover Research and similar program evaluations that suggests that the SRT process will be most effective when there is adherence to an implementation framework. The outcome evaluation will provide information on the operation of the initiative along with providing evaluation data for goals and objectives focused on student outcomes.

Appendices

Appendix A: Student Response Team Composition Guide

Position	Academic	Behavioral	Attendance
Administrator	*	*	*
General Ed Teacher(s)	*	*	*
Psychologist	*	*	
Parent(s)/Guardian(s)*	*	*	*
Student (depending on age and developmental capacity)	*	*	*
School Social Worker	*	*	*
School Counselor	*	*	*
School Nurse	*	*	*
Speech Therapist	*		
SIS/SIC	*	*	
ESL Teacher	*		
Reading Specialist	*		
Title I Specialist	*		
Gifted Resource Teacher	*		
Instructional Specialist	*	*	

*Parents/guardians should be invited and encouraged to attend all meetings; however, the team should proceed with the meeting if they are unable to attend.

Note: Adapted from Responding to Student Needs Manual 2017 Update

Endnotes

- ¹ Responding to Student Needs: School Guide to the Student Response Team Process (2013). Frequently Asked Questions
- ² Responding to Student Needs: School Guide to the Student Response Team Process (2017 Update).
- ³ Responding to Student Needs: School Guide to the Student Response Team Process (2017 Update).
- ⁴ Responding to Student Needs: School Guide to the Student Response Team Process (2017 Update).
- ⁵ Expanding our Schools Capacity through the Student Response Team Process PowerPoint
- ⁶ Responding to Student Needs: School Guide to the Student Response Team Process (2017 Update).
- ⁷ Critical Path: Student Response Team (SRT). (March 1, 2017).
- ⁸ Total population numbers were based on cumulative student enrollments during 2017-2018.
- ⁹ Unknown referral reason was due to one school not consistently documenting a reason for students' referrals.
- ¹⁰ Records for 12 students were not located in the division data warehouse; therefore, these students were not included in the demographic data.
- ¹¹ Hanover Research (March 2018). *Strategies for Assessing Student Response Team Effectiveness*.
- ¹² Rodgers, A. G. (2016). Response to Intervention: A Program Evaluation of Implementation in a Rural School District. Dissertation study. Gardner-Webb University.
- ¹³ Ruffini, S. J., Lindsay, J., McInerney, M., Waite, W., & Miskell, R. (2016). Measuring the implementation fidelity of the Response to Intervention framework in Milwaukee Public Schools (REL 2017–192). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>.
- ¹⁴ Education Policy Center at American Institutes for Research (April 2017). *Ten Steps to Make RTI Work in Your Schools*.
- ¹⁵ Hanover Research (March 2018). *Strategies for Assessing Student Response Team Effectiveness*.
- ¹⁶ Hanover Research (October 2017). *School- and District-Level MTSS Implementation*.
- ¹⁷ National Center on Response to Intervention (September 2012). *Things to Consider When Developing an RTI Evaluation Plan: Training Manual*. Retrieved from: <https://rti4success.org/sites/default/files/Developing%20an%20Evaluation%20Plan%20Manual.pdf>

Aaron C. Spence, Ed.D., Superintendent
Virginia Beach City Public Schools
2512 George Mason Drive, Virginia Beach, VA 23456-0038

Produced by the Department of Planning, Innovation, and Accountability
For further information, please call (757) 263-1199.

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