

FINAL REPORT

NEW HORIZONS REGIONAL EDUCATION CENTER STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

Overview of Process

As directed by the Virginia Peninsula Superintendents, the assistant superintendents of Newport News, York County, Poquoson, Williamsburg/James City County, Gloucester County and Hampton met on Tuesday, November 2, 2004 to outline a plan to accomplish the strategic analysis of New Horizons Regional Education Center. The purpose of this analysis is to provide data with which the Board of New Horizons may make informed decisions about the future direction of New Horizons based upon stakeholder input.

Because strategic planning is based on the premise that an organization grows best when it systematically reviews and challenges the assumptions that are the base of its daily operation, the first step in this process has been to form analysis teams for the three broad functioning areas of New Horizons: Career and Technical Education, Governor's School, and Special Education. The composition of each analysis team is as follows.

Career and Technical Education: This team is comprised of the Career and Technical Education leads from each school division served by New Horizons as well as one representative from each campus of New Horizons, the Tech Prep coordinator, and a Thomas Nelson Community College representative. Additionally, each school division and New Horizons selected a member of its Career and Technical Education Advisory Council to serve on the team. Linda Shifflette, Hampton City Schools, serves as the liaison for this team.

Governor's School: The school division liaison to the Governor's School from each served school division is a member of this team. A New Horizons representative has also been appointed. The various advisory councils for the represented school divisions have served as the *ad hoc* representatives to this analysis team. James Tucker, York County Schools, serves as the liaison for this team.

Special Education: This team is comprised of the Special Education directors from each school division served by New Horizons as well as one representative from the New Horizons Special Education staff. The various advisory councils for the represented school divisions serve as the *ad hoc* representatives to this analysis team. Marilyn Barr, Poquoson Schools, serves as the liaison for this team.

In addition to the three teams mentioned above, an additional analysis team comprised of the assistant superintendents from each division served by New Horizons has been formed. It will be the function of this team to identify unserved or underserved needs in each school division and to determine if these needs could best be met on a regional basis.

Each of the teams is utilizing the following data collection strategies as appropriate:

- Collection of trend data to include internal and external data
- Focus group interviews with students
- Focus group interviews with parents
- Focus group interviews with teachers
- Focus group interviews with other groups that may be specific to that team
- Review of best practices

Each analysis team is tasked with the following charge: *Develop recommendation(s) to meet the needs of (insert name of team) students at New Horizons Regional Education Center.*

To meet this charge, each team collects and reviews data and will identify the strengths, challenges, and projected needs for their group. From these, the group will make specific recommendations. These recommendations will be presented in the form of a “white paper” for each of the analysis teams.

Timeline

Activity	Date to be Done	By Whom
Review of draft proposal	November 9, 2004	Superintendents/Executive Director of New Horizons
Approval of proposal	First week of December, 2004	Superintendents/Executive Director of New Horizons
Selection of Team Members	By end of December, 2004	Assistant Superintendents
First Meeting of Analysis Teams	January, 2005	Assistant Superintendent Liaison
Analysis Team Interim Report	March 22, 2005	Team Leader
Analysis Team Final Report (White Paper)	July 26, 2005	Team Leader

The final reports submitted by the analysis teams will consist of specific recommendations in the form of a “white paper” that may be used to guide the work of the director.

Career and Technical Education Final Report

Recommendations

The membership of the Career and Technical Education Strategic Analysis group is as follows:

Jan Archibald—NHREC CTE Advisory Council, Business person
Von Gilbreath—City of Hampton, Economic Development
Deborah Buchanan—CTE Administrator, Newport News Schools
Cynthia Evans—CTE Administrator, Newport News Schools
Roger Tomlinson—Principal, Woodside Campus, NHREC
Sandy Hespe—CTE Administrator, York County Schools
Karen Kolet—CTE & Guidance Administrator, Williamsburg/James City
County Schools
Allan Melton—Northrup Grumman
Jean King—Principal, Gloucester County Schools
Judy Younger—CTE Administrator, Hampton City Schools
Jesse White—CTE Administrator, Hampton City Schools
Donald Bartholomay, Thomas Nelson Community College
David Creamer, Principal, Butler Farm Campus, NHREC
Marilyn Barr, Assistant Superintendent, Poquoson Schools
Gregory Russell, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation
John Patterson, Suttle Motor Corporation
Connie Stebel, Parent
Don Stebel, Parent
Zanette McMillan, Teacher, York County Schools
Autrice Campbell-Long, Peninsula Alliance for Economic Development
Sybil Wheatley, WM Jordan
Kathy Rogers, Teacher, Gloucester County Schools
Crystal Taylor, Tech Prep Coordinator, Thomas Nelson Community
College

The Career and Technical Education committee met on the following dates: January 25, February 18, February 25, March 4, March 18, April 15 and April 29, 2005.

The following are recommendations respectfully submitted by the Career and Technical Education committee. Recommendations are grouped into categories.

Finance & Budget

- Convene group of school finance directors to revise funding formula for NHREC.

- Seek opportunities such as grants and governor initiatives using a team of school division grantwriters.
- Develop a strategic plan for the future growth and renovation of NHREC with an emphasis on how to fund identified projects (include collaboration with business/industry).

Curriculum & Instruction

- Develop a set of rules/criteria to evaluate programs for “fit” at NHREC.
- Assess Point Option in terms of its mission to determine if its location in NHREC is a fit since it is not a regional program.
- Structure schedule to provide the most optimal learning experience to include aggressively pursuing a regional school calendar.
- Examine each current program based on local industry needs and projections, success in licensure, enrollment, and student potential earnings.
- Delineate and promote clearly identifiable career pathways from middle school to jobs (series of logical course sequences that include middle school, high school, NHREC, post-secondary training/education to include articulation--i.e, EMT)
- Develop and continue to offer only those CTE offerings that are industry-driven.
- Develop “satellite” offerings, distance learning, and on-line experiences with the lab components at NHREC.
- Appoint guidance committee to serve in advisory capacity for NHREC to strengthen the communication link from NHREC to individual schools.
- Study processes/systems for enrollment, attendance, and discipline.
- Investigate the possibility of students driving to a campus rather than riding a school bus—determine alternative transportation systems (driving, parents driving, car pooling, HRT, etc). School division transportation sometimes has a negative impact on student enrollment in NHREC courses.
- Investigate other areas of the state that are having success in the CTE area (scheduling, partnerships, funding formulas).

Industry Relevance

- Produce an industry-driven needs curricula versus a student interest curricula (i.e., Design Line model).
- Research/identify what current curricula are offered at NHREC and match these with business/industry needs.
- Form communication link with the various city economic development departments for information on what businesses are being targeted for the area.

- Strengthen working relationship with WIB.
- Increase LEA representation on WIB.

Collaborative Partnerships

- Establish stronger relationships with business/industry via the Career and Technical Education advisory council.
- Investigate a stronger working relationship with TNCC (i.e., dual enrollment) to include collaboration with TNCC for parallel courses, use of facilities, etc.
- Provide a full time guidance/counselor liaison position to foster two-way dialog with the student's home school
- Offer services needed to school divisions (i.e., homebound instruction) with NHREC serving as a clearinghouse.

Marketing

- Conduct a survey to determine the perception of NHREC in the community.
- Develop marketing plan targeted to parents, students, and business/industry with a clear message for NHREC's CTE program.

Gifted/Governor's School Final Report

Recommendations

The members of the committee included:

Joy Davis--Hampton City Schools
Konelia Blaha—Williamsburg/James City County Schools
Judy McDowell—Poquoson City Schools
Christine Hill—Newport News City Schools
Kate Richmond—York County Schools
Donna Poland—New Horizons Regional Education/ Governor's School
Karen Flowers—Gloucester Public Schools
James Tucker—York County Schools

The first meeting of the Gifted/Governor's School Strategic Analysis/ Planning Committee was held February 1, 2005 at the York County School Board Office and a second meeting was held June 14th at the New Horizons Regional Education/Gifted School. Major issues discussed included program development, calendar issues, travel concerns and community involvement. The following recommendations were developed:

Program design

- Develop a structured delivery model with specific curriculum strands that align with recommendations received from the Department of Education Governor's School evaluation team.

Student selection

- Develop a clearly defined student selection /admissions process using multiple criteria that aligns student strengths and interests with the program design (definition shall include specifically required pre-requisite coursework for all entering students)
- In collaboration with participating school divisions, utilize specific recruitment strategies to ensure ethnic and gender diversity

Enrollment

- Continue monitoring student enrollment to further define any program modifications for the future

Counseling

- Create a specialized counseling/affective component for gifted students attending New Horizons Governor's School
- Develop improved collaboration between Governor's School administration, teachers, and local high school guidance counselors and division gifted education administrators

Program calendar

- Develop alternative calendar/attendance options to accommodate differing division calendars.

Special Education Final Report

Recommendations

The membership of the Special Education Strategic Analysis committee is as follows:

Bob Pietrasanta, Newport News City Schools
Joan O'Brien, Newport News City Schools
Debbie Grosser, Williamsburg /James City County Schools
Karen Davis, Williamsburg /James City County Schools
Rusty Fairheart, York County Schools
Suzanne Creasey, York County Schools
Judith Connell, Poquoson City Schools
Fran Goforth, Gloucester County Schools
Jay Laros, Gloucester County Schools
Sharon Warren, Hampton City Schools
Kelly Wood, New Horizons Regional Center
Roger Tomlinson, New Horizons Regional Center
Jack Forbes, New Horizons Regional Center
Janice Gibbons, New Horizons Regional Center
Marilyn Barr, Poquoson City Schools

Meetings were held on January 19, 2005 and February 16, 2005.

The following recommendations are based on three major issues that emerged:

1. space/facilities
2. staffing
3. student enrollment and services.

The following chart reviews student enrollment and projections.

New Horizons Regional Education Center Special Education Enrollment and Projections

<i>Category</i>	<i>1995-96</i>	<i>2005-06</i>	<i>2010-2011</i>	<i>2015-2016</i>
Autism	48	122	183	305
Emotional Disturbance	61	109	139	170
Alt. Ed	40	36	40	40

Recommendations are as follows:

Space/Facilities

- To accommodate enrollment growth and provide mainstreaming opportunities for students in both special education programs, it was suggested the New Horizons Regional Education Center lease space from schools to house their programs. The committee wondered if it were possible for New Horizons to be included in the discussions as possible renters of buildings as school divisions are designing schools, renovating, and building new schools. There was concern raised about the quality of the special education facilities because prospective teachers have looked at the facility and/or salary scale and decided not to seek employment with New Horizons Regional Special Education Program. The committee discussed looking at the possibility of constructing a new Special Education facility to better meet the needs of the students with disabilities currently at Woodside Lane.
- It was recommended that budget development address such issues as: infrastructure, maintenance, and new construction. Is it possible for part of the tuition to go for infrastructure issues? Developing and managing a budget is extremely difficult because the cost of a teacher contract is still there even if the student enrollment is low. Funding continues to be an issue for the New Horizons Regional Special Education Program. The committee suggested exploring funding streams and how they work.
- A “thinking out of the box” idea was for New Horizons to provide for classes in schools and allow students from other school divisions to attend. One option would be for New Horizons to provide an umbrella of programs in school divisions and manage and supervise these programs. These students would be identified as needing a self-contained placement or inclusion classes as much as possible, but not needing a day treatment program.

Staffing

- Ms. Wood reported that it is very difficult for New Horizons to find highly qualified staff for a self contained setting and retain teachers. She reported the majority of her staff is on provisional licenses and as soon as they are fully licensed they seek employment in a school division. In the ED program, 2 of the 14 are highly qualified. It was suggested that perhaps distance learning might be a route to get highly qualified staff for core curriculum, while the special education teacher works with the

students in the classroom. Major issues for staffing are recruiting, retaining staff, and the pay scale. Suggestions included hiring a human resources person for special education staffing and pay a salary differential for teachers of students with disabilities, such as an additional 5%. It was suggested that we examine the teacher scales on the Southside and remember that we are asking teachers to work with our most difficult students.

- The committee recommended providing additional staff to provide semester intersession programs. There is a cost attached to this program to hire staff because using existing staff burns out teachers.

Student Enrollment and Services

- It is recommended that Career and Technical courses for students with disabilities be expanded. The courses in which students with disabilities were successful in have been eliminated due in part to cost and lack of personnel. It was recommended that partnerships be developed with related business such as nurseries for the horticulture course. In career and technical courses, it is difficult for some students with disabilities to meet the competencies required for industry and the curriculum. The committee suggested entry-level courses for students with disabilities such as: medical assistant, food preparation assistant, grounds keeper, auto detailer, and security training, and continue with salon assistant.
- It was recommended that New Horizons provide a coordinator/clearing house for job coach placements to prevent duplication of requests to businesses and to place students in businesses in their home districts. Parents report to special education directors that there are limited opportunities for job coach placements. Job coach placements are difficult to juggle within the parameters of legal issues such as age and liability.
- A lively discussion developed between the committee members on how to improve the existing program. The committee felt that basic transition services that are currently offered at New Horizons are good, but could be improved through the existing program and staff. It was recommended that Special Education Directors and Transition Specialists meet and coordinate job coach opportunities with New Horizons transition staff and consider reconstructing programs already in place.
- The committee recommends a continuum of instruction from classroom to work. It was suggested that the intersession time would be an opportunity for expanded opportunities for job coach. Suggested classes for the intersession are food prep, hotel/hospitality services, landscaping/horticulture, home health aide, auto detailing, security

training, and salon assistant. The flow of transition services would be career evaluation, prevocational or soft skills, enclave, work awareness training, job coach, CTE classes, technical training, apprenticeship, and job placement.

- A special program was suggested for Newport Academy students: provide academic instruction in the morning and work experiences in the afternoon.
- The committee suggested improving the enrollment projection process. The concern was school divisions being held accountable for slots requested for the program even though slots in a particular grade level may be filled. Unfortunately, when slots are filled at a given level, students are turned away and sending school divisions are still held accountable for unfilled slots.

Assistant Superintendent Group Final Report

Recommendations

As we looked toward the future for New Horizons, some essential questions emerged:

- What is or should be the purpose of New Horizons?
- How can we fully maximize educational opportunities at New Horizons?
- What will it take for New Horizons to become the leading regional school center?

The following are recommendations:

- Career pathways—Identify career and industry certification pathways with multiple exit points that connect with the students' home schools (e.g., identify the math and science levels that may be required and/or necessary in order for the student to be successful in a particular pathway.) Realign offerings to meet current market demand and utilize greater articulation with Thomas Nelson Community College.
- Regional Project Graduation Academy—Offer verified credit course offerings in the areas of English and Algebra I. Determine what other disciplines seem to create the greatest challenge for students earning verified credits.
- Extended High School Program—Develop an extended high school regional program for students who need to return for the purpose of earning verified credits (define the areas and/or disciplines).
- Enrollment Process—Evaluate the enrollment processes to participating divisions to include timelines, criteria/prerequisites, and delineation of responsibilities.
- Human Resources/Personnel—Evaluate the current human resources/personnel service delivery at NHREC to determine if staffing within that area is appropriate to meet the needs of faculty and staff.
- Partnership with WHRO—Explore distance learning opportunities through WHRO. The delivery of instruction could be handled in various ways to include content delivery via distance learning or on-line learning and project-based learning on site at NHREC.
- Teacher Academy—Praxis Preparatory Program—develop an adult learner program for teachers. Design the program to address the “highly qualified” teacher requirements that should include a strong Praxis preparation and/or review.

Concluding Remarks

Recurring themes emerged from the work of these groups. These themes include:

- Space—how it is used, where it exists
- Customer focus
- Funding formulas/budget process
- Time
- Collaborative partnerships
- Promotion/recruitment/public relations
- Good to better to the VERY BEST

The individuals on the various committees respectfully submit their recommendations to the New Horizons Regional Education Board for their consideration. This has been an opportunity for all involved to look at New Horizons as a positive impact on our schools and community and to collaboratively work toward making what is good become the very best. We wish to thank the Board for allowing us to be a part of this important process.