SCHOOL-LEVEL ACADEMIC REVIEW PROCESS GUIDELINES
Adopted by the Virginia Board of Education, September 21, 2005

Purpose of the School-level Academic Review

The school-level academic review is designed to help schools identify and analyze instructional and organizational factors affecting student achievement. The focus of the review process is on the systems, processes, and practices that are being implemented at the school and division levels. Specifically, information is gathered that relates to the following areas of review:

- Implementation of curriculum aligned with the Standards of Learning
- Use of time and scheduling practices that maximize instruction
- Use of data to make instructional and planning decisions
- Design of ongoing, school-based program of professional development
- Implementation of a school improvement plan addressing identified areas of weakness
- Implementation of research-based instructional interventions for schools warned in English or mathematics
- Organizational systems and processes
  - Use of school improvement planning process that includes data analysis and input of faculty, parents, and community
  - School culture, including engagement of parents and the community
  - Use of learning environments that foster student achievement
  - Allocation of resources aligned to areas of need

These areas of review provide a framework for the school-level academic review process. Within each of these areas, indicators reflecting effective practices have been identified for review. These areas of review are based on state and federal regulations, and research-based practices found to be effective in improving student achievement. The academic review team collects and analyzes data that demonstrate the school's status in implementing these practices. Based on their findings, the academic review team provides the school and the division with information that can be used to develop or revise, and implement the school's three-year school improvement plan, as required by the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia.*

The school-level academic review process is tailored to meet the unique needs and circumstances presented by the school. The first year that a school is rated "accredited with warning" an academic review team conducts a comprehensive review of the areas related to the systems, processes, and practices that are being implemented at the school and division levels as indicated above. Throughout the school's continued status in warning, the

academic review process is designed to monitor the implementation of the school improvement plan and provide technical assistance to support the school's improvement efforts.

The division superintendent may request that the school division be allowed to conduct their own academic review process of schools accredited with warning, using their own established processes. Such requests must be sent to the Superintendent of Public Instruction for approval. The request must show that the proposed process and areas of review address the components of the school-level academic review process approved by the Board of Education.

Overview of the Academic Review Process

The school-level academic review is a continuous process. An overview of the process for identifying and supporting schools in the academic review process is described in Chart 1. The focus of the academic review is on the development, monitoring, and implementation of the school improvement plan. Table 1 provides an overview of the implementation steps of the school-level academic review process.
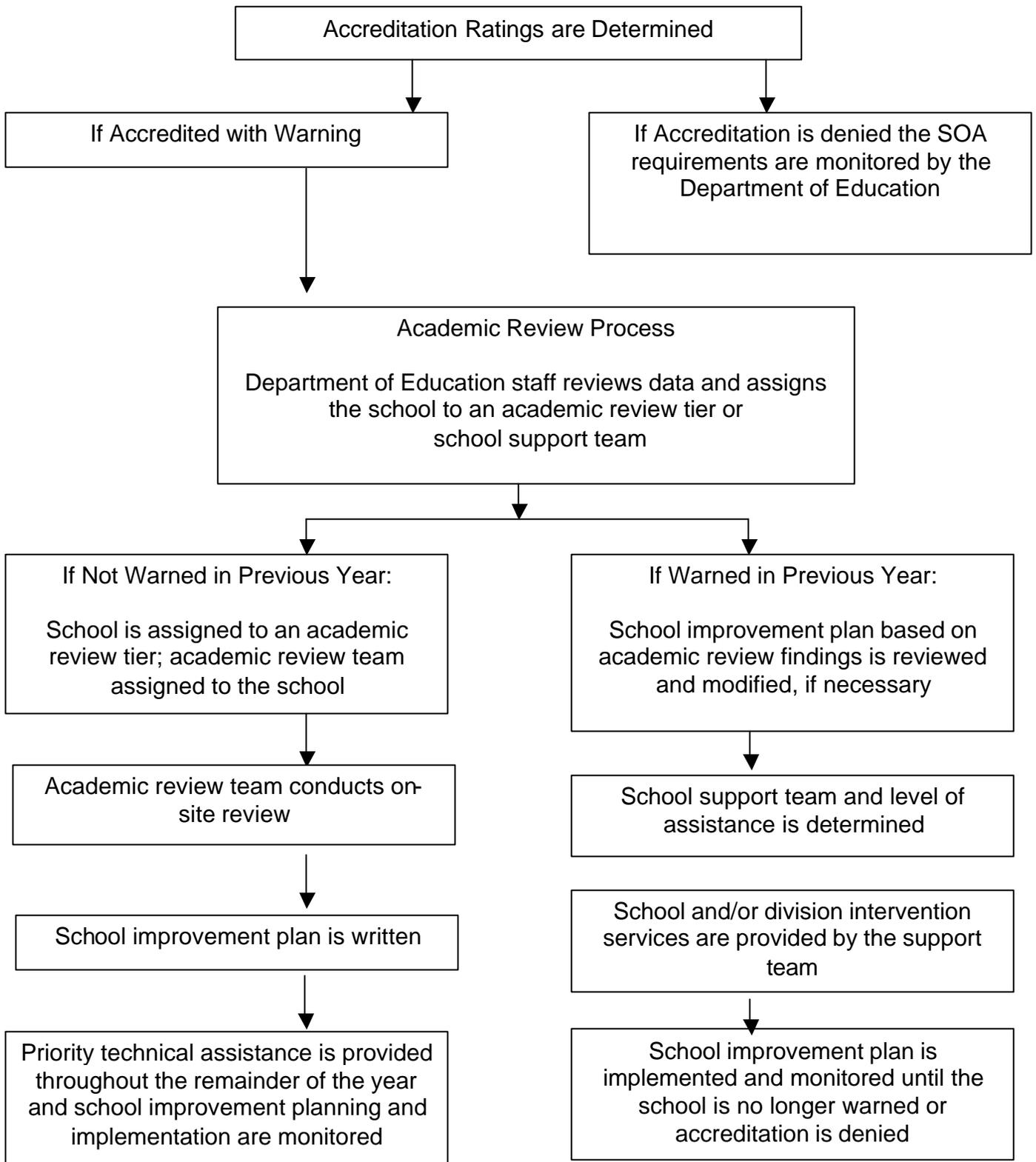
In the first year of warning, the Department of Education assigns the school to one of three academic review "tiers" based on the circumstances of the school. Table 2 describes the tiered approach that is used to assign schools to an academic review process in their first year of warning.

An academic review team, either state or locally directed, will conduct an on-site review and assist the school in identifying areas of need and writing an effective three-year school improvement plan. Concurrent with developing a school improvement plan, priority assistance is prescribed by the academic review team and approved by the Department of Education for immediate delivery.

If the school is not fully accredited in the year following the academic review team visit, the Department of Education will identify a school support team to provide technical assistance to the school and/or division to modify, monitor, and implement the school improvement plan.

Chart 1

ACADEMIC REVIEW: A CONTINUOUS PROCESS

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                    │  Accreditation Ratings are Determined │
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If Accredited with Warning	If Accreditation is denied the SOA requirements are monitored by the Department of Education

Academic Review Process

Department of Education staff reviews data and assigns the school to an academic review tier or school support team

If Not Warned in Previous Year:	If Warned in Previous Year:
School is assigned to an academic review tier; academic review team assigned to the school	School improvement plan based on academic review findings is reviewed and modified, if necessary
Academic review team conducts on-site review	School support team and level of assistance is determined
School improvement plan is written	School and/or division intervention services are provided by the support team
Priority technical assistance is provided throughout the remainder of the year and school improvement planning and implementation are monitored	School improvement plan is implemented and monitored until the school is no longer warned or accreditation is denied

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Table 1: Overview of the Academic Review Process

Step One: Review of Accountability Data

The Department of Education reviews accountability data for all schools accredited with warning.

Based on the review of data, if the school was not warned in the previous year, the school is assigned to one of three tiers of review (see Table 2) and the Department of Education identifies the membership of the **academic review team.**

If the school was warned in the previous year, based on the review of data and report of academic review findings, the Department of Education assigns the school to a level of intervention (technical assistance) and identifies the membership of the **school support team.** Step two, the on-site review, will be omitted since it was completed in the prior year.

Step Two: On-Site Review   (Omitted if on-site review conducted in prior year)

The **academic review team** completes an on-site review of the school resulting in a draft report of findings that is shared with the principal and superintendent or his/her designee.

The principal and division superintendent will have 15 business days to respond to the Department of Education concerning the draft report of findings. The department will approve the final report of findings and within 15 business days send a copy of the report to the division superintendent and local school board chair.

Step Three: School Improvement Planning

For schools not warned in the previous year, the **academic review team** assists the school in writing an effective school improvement plan based on the team's report of findings. Immediate priority assistance is provided throughout the remainder of the year.

For those schools warned in the previous year, the Department of Education reviews accountability data, identifies the membership of the **school support team**, and assigns the school to a level of technical assistance. The school support team monitors the implementation of the school improvement plan and assists, if necessary, with modifications to the plan.
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Step Four: School Support Team

The **school support team** provides focused technical assistance and monitoring of the school improvement plan throughout the year as prescribed by the level of intervention (technical assistance).

Table 2: Tier Assignments for Academic Review Teams

Tier*	Characteristics of Schools	Academic Review Team Members Provided by VDOE	Academic Review Team Members Provided by LEA (certified in process)
Tier I: State Directed	Any school warned in 2 or more content areas OR Title I school warned in English or mathematics that DID NOT meet requirements in the content area(s) to make adequately yearly progress (AYP) under NCLB	Team leader Department of Education staff or contractors assigned to assist in the school in the area(s) of improvement	None
Tier II: Locally Assisted	Title I school warned in English or mathematics that DID meet requirements in the content area(s) to make AYP under NCLB OR Non-Title I school warned in English or mathematics that DID NOT meet requirements in the content area(s) to make AYP under NCLB OR Any school warned in science or history social sciences with a pass rate more than 14 points lower than that required for full accreditation	Team Leader May include Department of Education staff or contractors assigned to assist the school in the area(s) of improvement	Local education agency (LEA) staff assigned to assist the school in the area(s) of improvement
Tier III: Locally Directed	Non-Title I school warned in English or mathematics that DID meet requirements in the content area(s) to make AYP under NCLB OR Any school warned in science or history social sciences with pass rate within 14 points of that required for full accreditation	Team leader	LEA staff assigned to assist the school in the area(s) of improvement

*The Superintendent of Public Instruction may approve other School-level Academic Review tiers or other department initiatives as alternatives to approved review processes dependent upon the special needs and circumstances of the warned school.

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Implementation of the Academic Review Process

Academic Review Team

For those schools not warned in the previous year, the **academic review team** completes the on-site review to identify and analyze instructional and organizational factors affecting student achievement. The focus of the review process is on the systems, processes, and practices that are being implemented at the school and division levels. The academic review team consists of Department of Education staff and/or independent contractors trained in the academic review process. The academic review team assists the school in writing the school improvement plan based on the final report of findings. Concurrent with developing a school improvement plan, priority assistance is prescribed by the academic review team and approved by the Department of Education for immediate delivery.

The academic review team conducts an on-site review for those schools not warned in the previous year based on a three-tiered approach. Table 2 describes the three tier assignments of the academic review. Those schools assigned to Tier I remain a priority for the Department of Education for ongoing technical assistance. The department staff and/or independent contractors trained in the academic review process conduct the review and provide needed priority technical assistance following the review.   For schools assigned to Tiers II and III, the tiered approach allows local education agency (LEA) staff trained in the school-level academic review process to conduct the academic review with oversight by a Department of Education staff or a contracted educational consultant.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction may approve other academic review tiers or other department initiatives as alternatives to approved review processes dependent upon the special needs and circumstances of the warned school.

School Support Team

For those schools that were warned in the previous year and received an on-site academic review, the school support team reviews the current plan and provides technical assistance to the school to update the school improvement plan based on new accountability data. The school support team consists of Department of Education staff and/or independent contractors trained in developing, implementing, and monitoring the school improvement plan. The school support team provides focused technical assistance and monitors the school improvement plan throughout the year as prescribed by the level of assistance assigned.

The school support team provides technical assistance based on the specific needs of the school and/or division. In some schools, only school intervention is needed, while in other schools, division intervention and allocation of resources may have to be diverted to support the efforts of the school(s) to improve. Schools are required by 8 VAC 20-131-310 to develop a three-year school improvement plan. The school support team monitors and provides technical assistance to the school during the time it is rated accredited with warning.

Levels of Intervention and Assistance

A division-level review as prescribed by the Board of Education regulation 8 VAC 20-700 is defined as "Level A: Division Intervention." As part of the division-level review process, the Department of Education will conduct on-site compliance monitoring of relevant state and federal laws and regulations.

For "Level B: School and Division Intervention" assistance, the school support team provides technical assistance at least monthly to the school and division. In addition, the Department of Education may complete a federal program monitoring review or conduct follow-ups to a previous visit. Eligibility for this level of technical assistance is determined primarily by considering the following criteria:

- A school that has been warned for two or more consecutive years in the same content area and did not reduce its failure rate in the subject(s) warned by at least 10% from the previous year

- A Title I school that is in school improvement status

For "Level C: School Intervention" assistance, the school support team provides technical assistance at least quarterly to schools that have demonstrated a 10 percent decrease in the failure rate from the previous year's assessment scores in the warned areas. For Title I schools in school improvement, the team leader determines compliance with federal regulations regarding school choice, supplemental services, or required restructuring and reports any deficiencies to department staff. The Department of Education provides technical assistance and follow-up accordingly.

Table 3 provides an overview of the three levels of technical assistance provided by the school support team.

Team Leaders

A team leader is assigned to each school rated accredited with warning for both the academic review team and the school support team. Typically, the team leader is an independent contractor; however, the team leader may be a

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Department of Education staff member assigned to the school. The team leader is primarily responsible for coordinating schedules and activities with review team members and the school. This person is also responsible for facilitating the data collection and analysis process during on-site visits, entering the team's findings into the academic review database, and developing and distributing reports.

For those schools that were not warned in the previous year, the team leader leads the **academic review team** during the on-site review. The team leader is responsible for coordinating follow-up visits to develop the school improvement plan and provide technical assistance necessary for the school's improvement throughout the remainder of the year.

For those schools that were warned in the previous year, the team leader leads the **school support team** to review and update the current school improvement plan and coordinates follow-up technical assistance necessary for the school's improvement.

Table 3: Levels of Assistance Provided by the School Support Team

Level of Technical Assistance	Description of Intervention and Support Services Provided
Level A **Division Intervention**	The Department of Education conducts on-site reviews for both accountability and federal program monitoring or conduct follow-up to previous visits, interview school division personnel, review operational practices, and complete an analysis of data related to compliance with state and federal regulations. A division-level review is conducted as prescribed by Board of Education regulation 8 VAC 20-700.
Level B **School and Division Intervention** Follow-up monthly	The school support team: ▪ Reviews action steps completed in the school improvement plan based on the most recent report of findings. ▪ Analyzes most current data. ▪ Reviews allocation of needed resources required for school improvement ▪ Determines the school's priority area(s) of need to support improvement (i.e., professional development, remediation) and modifies the plan based on these areas. ▪ Assists the school to involve community and parents in updating the school improvement plan based on data. The Department of Education conducts a division-level federal program monitoring review or follow-up to a previous visit. The division assigns a LEA representative to the school to meet with the school support team and principal monthly to monitor the implementation of the school's improvement plan. The school support team provides monthly technical assistance to the principal and LEA to support the school in implementing the school improvement plan and provide support as needed for the school's improvement.

Level of Technical Assistance	Description of Intervention and Support Services Provided
Level C **School intervention** Follow-up quarterly	The school support team: - Reviews action steps completed in the school improvement plan based on the most recent report of findings. - Analyzes most current data. - Reviews allocation of needed resources required for school improvement - Determines the school's priority area(s) of need to support improvement (i.e., professional development, remediation) and modifies the plan based on these areas. - Assists the school to involve community and parents in updating the school improvement plan based on data. For Title I schools in improvement status, the team leader and school support team determine compliance with federal regulations regarding school choice, supplemental services, or required restructuring and report any deficiencies to department staff. The Department of Education provides technical assistance and follow-up accordingly. The team leader and school support team, if needed, provide quarterly follow-up assistance to the principal and school improvement team to monitor continued implementation of school improvement plan.

Evaluation of the School-level Academic Review Process

The Department of Education will continue to report annually to the Board on the findings of the school-level academic reviews and on the effectiveness of the academic review processes being used. Implementation of the school-level academic review process will be monitored and evaluated throughout the school year.