

Door Wide Shut posted – August 5, 2016

The new superintendent was busy traveling around the district figuring out what all ills Hampton City Schools. I imagine he sat inside his office contemplating the path Hampton City Schools needs to take. Maybe this is why his door wasn't as "open" as an "open door policy" implies. My hopes were dashed early for a more productive superintendent by parents having issues with his lack of communication. The *coup de gras* was the **No.1 in the Nation**

(<https://nebula.wsimg.com/bb0eb5645a1185ca62c2d335aafb57?AccessKeyId=F2E1E31F591DDE27ADAF&disposition=0&alloworigin=1>)

ranking they gave themselves. I thought the new superintendent might reign 1 Franklin Street in on that kind of puffery. I thought wrong.

. . .

You have to wonder why Hampton City Schools would put unlicensed teachers in the classrooms if it were in violation of state law and common sense.

"The Executive Director of School Leadership will collaborate with division and school level administrators to ensure that all instructional staff meet the definition of highly-qualified/highly-effective."

**Hampton City Schools
2015-2016 Title I, Part A, Improving Basic Programs**

Title I schools are required to have licensed teachers that are considered **highly qualified**. Why is this important? Title I schools serve the neediest of the needy. In 2014-2015, Hampton City Schools reported 100% compliance in providing highly qualified teachers at Title I schools. In 2015-2016, Hampton reported to the contrary. Not only were fewer than 100% of the teachers highly qualified, some were also unlicensed. After months of asking the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) for the ramifications Hampton would suffer for this violation of law and what VDOE's role is in protecting our children against such acts. I finally got an answer...VDOE will tell the Governor on them. What about the money paid to those unlicensed "teachers"? Because it is state law that **"No teacher shall be regularly employed by a school board or paid from public funds unless such teacher holds a license or provisional license issued by the Board of Education."** Are board members going to reimburse our district? Don't hold your breath. This I didn't ask VDOE...why bother.

VDOE signs off on this violation with a – "Thank you for your continued efforts to ensure compliance with the requirements in the legislation."

The federal government entrusts our state to dish-out Title I cash to districts. Why –

"To ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments."

U.S. Department of Education

In February and April, Hampton City Schools had a Title I audit performed by VDOE. Did the classrooms with the teachers who were not highly qualified required to be staffed with qualified teachers...NO! In fact, of the unlicensed teachers, one left before the visit by VDOE, one left a month after the first visit, and the last one in a Title I school stayed until the end of the school year.

Thank you for your effort VDOE!?!



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 2120
RICHMOND, VA 23218-2120

May 12, 2016

Dr. Jeffery O. Smith
Division Superintendent
Hampton City Public Schools
1 Franklin Street
Hampton, Virginia 23669-3570

Dear Dr. Smith:

On February 24 and April 12, 2016, the Virginia Department of Education conducted monitoring to ensure that certain federally-funded programs and activities under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA), as amended, were implemented as stipulated by law. Specifically, Title I, Part A, and Title III, Part A, programs were reviewed as operated by Hampton City Public Schools.

The Virginia Department of Education is pleased to inform you that your Title I, Part A, programs and activities meet program requirements. However, during monitoring it was noted that the division does not have 100 percent highly qualified teachers in Title I schoolwide schools for the 2015-2016 year. Although the terms "highly qualified teacher" and "highly qualified paraprofessional" will be eliminated as of August 1, 2016, under the *Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015* (ESSA) and Section 22.1-298.1 of the Code of Virginia, students must still be taught by teachers who are properly licensed and endorsed for the classes they are assigned to teach. Thank you for your continued efforts to ensure compliance with the requirements in the legislation.

The federal program monitoring review also presented no findings under Title III, Part A. However, the review did note a concern regarding Title III, Part A, federal requirements as they pertain to Lau v. Nichols (1974), providing programs and services to English Learners. In order to address these concerns, the Virginia Department of Education will provide technical assistance to Hampton City Public Schools in the spring and summer of 2016. In addition, VDOE will follow up quarterly with the Title III Coordinator in Hampton City Public Schools to ensure that federal requirements are being met as they pertain to Lau v. Nichols (1974).

If you need assistance or have questions please contact Shyla Vesitis, Title I, Part A, specialist, at Shyla.Vesitis@doe.virginia.gov or (804) 225-3711.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Lynn Sodat in black ink.

Lynn Sodat, Ph.D.
Acting Director
Office of Program Administration and Accountability

LS/getb

cc: Ms. Anita Owens, Title I, Part A, Coordinator
Ms. Deborah Sommer, Title III, Part A, Coordinator

. . .

"As you are aware, it takes at least three to four consecutive years of a well defined instructional program with outstanding teacher pedagogy to make a measurable difference in student achievement outcomes. My first year has been devoted to defining systems as we build from places of strength."

Year in Review by Superintendent Jeffery Smith

Is this his way of telling us that we can't expect improvement when new SOL results and accreditation data is available...to the public?

Smith's statement above would indicate that he knows the importance of "outstanding teacher[s]" for "student achievement", yet some classrooms were not only taught by teachers that were not highly qualified but unlicensed. Surely he encountered them during his Look, Listen and Learn tour too...became aghast...and replaced the unlicensed or less than highly qualified teachers. Or maybe he learned about this situation while verifying the IPAL report which he signed in February and then took action. It would appear not.

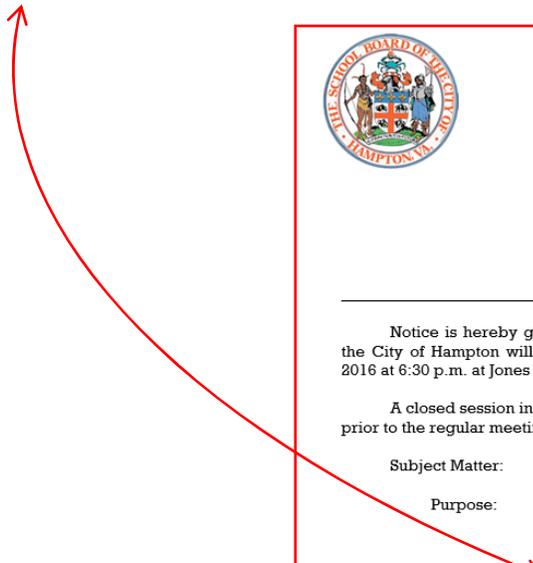
Why are we losing so many teachers?

(<https://nebula.wsimg.com/e934f221fcb7bf22b2632b02934249e0?AccessKeyId=F2E1E31F591DDE27ADAF&disposition=0&alloworigin=1>)

. . .

Speaking of SOL results, pretty sure the board became aware of Hampton's SOL stats during Wednesday's closed meeting. The board held a closed meeting to discuss test results.

Virginia Code 2.2-3705.1 – "Nothing contained in this subdivision shall prohibit the release of test scores or **results** as provided by law."





**HAMPTON SCHOOL BOARD
PUBLIC NOTICE**

One Franklin Street
Hampton, VA 23669
www.hampton.k12.va.us

July 28, 2016

Notice is hereby given that members of the Hampton School Board of the City of Hampton will hold a regular meeting on Wednesday, August 3, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. at Jones Magnet Middle School.

A closed session in reference to the following is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. prior to the regular meeting:

Subject Matter: Consideration of Records

Purpose: Discussion or consideration of results of tests, examinations or other records excluded from chapter 2.2-3711(A)

FOIA Exemption: Virginia Code Section: § 2.2-3705.1

The agendas for both meetings and additional information on the meetings will be available through our website.

Carolyn S. Bowers
Clerk of School Board

Contact Information:
Clerk of School Board
(757) 727-2011
cbowers@hampton.k12.va.us

New leadership and same ole lack of transparency.