

**Polk County
Voluntary Public School Choice (VPSC)
Grant**

**Performance Report
July 2009**

(Performance April through June 2009)

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Project Activities Tied to Polk County’s VPSC Grant Outcomes with State Objectives to Include Local Performance to Date

Polk County’s VPSC grant narrative presents specific outcomes to be achieved in relation to each of its two goals. *Tables 2, 3 and 4* correlate Polk County’s goals and related outcomes to the State’s Performance Measures. The status statements included within each table represent activities reported for Year 1 as well as an update to include activities through the third quarter of Year 2.

Table 2—Polk County’s Voluntary Public Schools Choice (VPSC) Grant Actual and Anticipated Outcomes as Related to State Objective 1		
<p>State Objective 1. In target public school districts, increase the number of families that exercise inter-district public school choice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Measure 1a. By the end of the second quarter in the inter-district agreement models planning period, 100% of the inter-district partnerships or multi-inter-district transfer partnerships will implement plans to create or expand school choice programs, particularly at middle or high schools, for operations to commence August 2009. • State Measure 1b. By the end of the third quarter of the planning grant period, 100% of the inter-district and/or multi-inter-district partnerships that require transportation will have a transportation plan for inter-district students for selected school choice schools by August 2009. 		
<p>Polk Goal #1: 1a—Review current choice offerings and transfer policies</p>		
Anticipated Outcomes in Polk County’s VPSC Grant		Status in Polk County’s VPSC Grant as of June 2009
1.1.a Contract to Marie Sneed <i>(Hire a consultant to review practices and make recommendations.)</i>	September 2008	All contract work has been completed with recommendations received. (See appendix¹)
1.1.b Model inter-local agreement <i>(Develop a comprehensive master plan to move students among districts.)</i>	May 2009	As of September 2008, inter-district agreements are in place to allow student transfers as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polk County to Osceola County • Osceola County to Polk County • Polk County to Hillsborough County • Hillsborough County to Polk County (See appendix²)
1.3.a Submit inter-district transfer report to Coalition audience. <i>(Present an update on inter-district transfers at coalition choice summit.)</i>	October 2009, 2010 and 2011	Not yet applicable
1.3.b Create and distribute policy and inter-district transfer agreements. <i>(Send each district copies of the modifications to district policy, model inter-district transfer agreements and other relevant documentation to facilitate replication.)</i>	August 2009	Not yet applicable
1.1.c District transportation plans with regards to choice, charter and Title I options <i>(Develop a transportation plan in each district to assure that transportation is not a barrier to choice enrollment.)</i>	March 2009	As of April 2009, there are no formal inter-district transportation plans in place. Options have been reviewed with sustainability being a focus and concern. However, strategies are being implemented to finalize a plan while collaborating with Yolanda Miranda-Hill, program manager for this grant. (See appendix³)

Table 2—Polk County’s Voluntary Public Schools Choice (VPSC) Grant Actual and Anticipated Outcomes as Related to State Objective 1

<p>State Objective 1. In target public school districts, increase the number of families that exercise inter-district public school choice. (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Measure 1c. Increase the number of families that exercise public school choice via the inter-districts models by 2% each year after models’ implementation in August 2009, thus increasing overall number of student transfers by 6% at end of grant period. 												
<p>Polk Goal #1: 1a—Review current choice offerings and transfer policies. (continued)</p>												
<p>Anticipated Outcomes in Polk County’s VPSC Grant</p>		<p>Status in Polk County’s VPSC Grant as of June 2009</p>										
<p><u>1.2.a</u> Report of students transferring between Polk, Hillsborough and Osceola <i>(Evaluate effectiveness of current agreements with schools in Osceola and Hillsborough Counties.)</i></p>	<p>November 2009</p>	<p>The number of students in Polk, Hillsborough and Osceola Counties who exercised school choice via the inter-district models to date for the 2008-2009 school year is as follows.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="background-color: #d3d3d3;">2008-2009</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Polk to Osceola</td> <td style="text-align: center;">38</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Osceola to Polk</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Polk to Hillsborough</td> <td style="text-align: center;">13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hillsborough to Polk</td> <td style="text-align: center;">7</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	2008-2009		Polk to Osceola	38	Osceola to Polk	3	Polk to Hillsborough	13	Hillsborough to Polk	7
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		Polk to Osceola	38									
		Osceola to Polk	3									
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Hillsborough to Polk	7											
<p><u>1.2.b</u> Report of students moving between districts and their free-and-reduced-lunch status <i>(Formalize and prioritize student movement between districts to emphasize needs of high poverty students.)</i></p>	<p>March 2010</p>	<p>Not yet applicable</p>										
<p><u>1.2.c</u> Needs assessment including types of choice and barriers to choice <i>(Create and utilize a needs assessment to identify choices appealing to students and parents, barriers to accessing choices, and steps to overcome barriers.)</i></p>	<p>May 2009, 2010 and 2011</p>	<p>Partnering districts were surveyed about the types of choice and common barriers to choice in their respective districts. A collective report of these findings may be found in the appendix. (See appendix⁴)</p>										
<p><u>1.2.d</u> Marketing media to include but not be limited to brochures, videos and web based media <i>(Develop and disseminate marketing and information tools in multiple languages.)</i></p>	<p>March 2010</p>	<p>Not yet applicable</p>										
<p><u>1.2.e</u> Report of number and type of marketing information used <i>(Evaluate effectiveness of marketing and information tools.)</i></p>	<p>March 2010, 2011, and 2012</p>	<p>Not yet applicable</p>										
<p><u>1.3.c</u> Brochures, videos and other marketing tools <i>(Provide coalition members with brochures, videos and other marketing tools developed via this grant.)</i></p>	<p>June 2009, 2010 and 2011</p>	<p>Brochure templates are being developed with input from the nine partnering districts marketing inter-district transfers and career academies. (See appendix⁵)</p>										

Table 3—Polk County’s Voluntary Public Schools Choice (VPSC) Grant Actual and Anticipated Outcomes as Related to State Objective 2

State Objective 2. In target communities, increase the number of families with children in lower-performing schools who transfer to higher-performing schools.

- **State Measure 2a.** Number of school choice activities conducted for parents at targeted schools, specific to those schools that have failed to make AYP for two or more years, will be increased by 25% at the end of 2011.
- **State Measure 2b.** From 2007 through 2011, training participation of community and parent volunteers at the School Choice Parent Resource Centers will increase by 30%.
- **State Measure 2c.** By end of grant 25% more families at each School Choice Parent Resource Center operating under this grant will use personalized assistance in comfortable community settings with community volunteers and Public School choice staff.

Polk Goal: No Polk County VPSC goal addresses State measures 2a, 2b or 2c.

Table 3—Polk County’s Voluntary Public Schools Choice (VPSC) Grant Actual and Anticipated Outcomes as Related to State Objective 2

State Objective 2. In target communities, increase the number of families with children in lower-performing schools who transfer to higher-performing schools.

- **State Measure 2d.** Increase number of student transfer applications to public school choice options in targeted lower-performing schools to higher-performing schools and/or programs by 2% in 2009, 3% each year after, totaling 11% gain in transfers by 2011.

Polk Goal #1: 1b—Provide training to promote high quality-high yield choice schools.

Anticipated Outcomes in Polk County’s VPSC Grant		Status in Polk County’s VPSC Grant as of June 2009
1.b.1 Self assessment instrument data <i>(Complete self assessment instrument in each participating district.)</i>	June 2009	Partnering districts were surveyed about the types of choice and common barriers to choice in their respective districts. A collective report of these findings may be found in the appendix. (See appendix⁴)
1.b.2 Contract for specific, high yield training addressing key areas of improvement as identified <i>(Identify key areas of improvement in each district; plan and contract for training to address these areas.)</i>	June 2009	Polk has offered training sessions for choice, charter and career academy leaders. These training opportunities were offered in April and June of 2009. (See appendix⁴)
1.b.3 Training program to include introductory, advanced and train-the-trainer models for district and school-based personnel <i>(Meet to share training results and develop a targeted training program.)</i>	June 2010, 2011, and 2012	Not yet applicable

Polk Goal #1: 1c—Offer a summit for choice staff, career academy instructors and charter authorizers to promote high quality-high yield programs

Anticipated Outcomes in Polk County’s VPSC Grant		Status in Polk County’s VPSC Grant as of June 2009
1.c.1.a Enewsletters <i>(Take active roles in the central region of the FPSCC to include updates via the newsletter, presentations at meetings and serving in leadership roles.)</i>	October 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011	Enewsletter was transmitted October 2008 through the Florida Public School Choice Consortium via online newsletter link. (http://www.fpscc.net/newsletter/05polkvpssc.htm)
1.c.1.b Training for the north and south regions of the state to share online resources, tools and key learnings <i>(Provide training for the north and south regions to share resources and provide tools and key learnings.)</i>	June 2011 and 2012	Not yet applicable

Table 3—Polk County's Voluntary Public Schools Choice (VPSC) Grant Actual and Anticipated Outcomes as Related to State Objective 2

<u>1.c.1.c</u> Agendas and sign-in sheets <i>(Present at state and national conferences to disseminate information.)</i>	March 2010, 2011, and 2012	Not yet applicable
<u>1.c.2.a</u> A self evaluation and needs assessment <i>(Share self evaluation and needs assessment materials developed and implemented through the project in summer workshops.)</i>	March 2009 and 2010	A self evaluation and needs assessment occurred April 23-24, 2009. Data from the districts were shared through a collaborative forum. Partnering districts were surveyed about the types of choice and common barriers to choice in their respective districts. A collective report of these findings may be found in the appendix. (See appendix⁴)
<u>1.c.2.b</u> Agendas, curriculum maps and models <i>(Focus workshop strands during years 3 and 4 on teacher training resources available via the career academy model and implementation of inter-district transfer agreements, transportation options and solutions as well as authorizer intervention plans.)</i>	June 2010	Not yet applicable
<u>1.c.2.c</u> Agendas <i>(Focus training strands in years 4 and 5 on high yield strategies to recruit and retain students, particularly high need students.)</i>	June 2011 and 2012	Not yet applicable
<u>1.c.2.d</u> Agendas <i>(Continue workshops beyond proposal funding period.)</i>	June 2013	Not yet applicable
<u>1.c.3.a</u> A web address and hard copy print material as applicable to site, training or material <i>(Coordinate information and web based offerings.)</i>	December 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012	www.fpssc.net/vpsc/index.htm contains Voluntary Public School Choice data and print material from summer trainings and presenters.
Polk Goal #2: 2—Create a comprehensive, sequential model for the development and implementation of career academies.		
Anticipated Outcomes in Polk County's VPSC Grant		Status in Polk County's VPSC Grant as of March 2009
<u>2.1.a</u> Implementation plan <i>(Create a detailed implementation plan for academies to include</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Academy types</i> • <i>Locations</i> • <i>Recruitment of students</i> • <i>Development of intra and inter district choice options</i> • <i>An application system and process by district</i> <i>)</i>	August 2009	Not yet applicable
<u>2.1.b</u> Participant roster for career academy staff attending a week-long summer curriculum mapping workshop <i>(Send career academy teachers to a summer curriculum mapping workshop.)</i>	June 2010	Not yet applicable
<u>2.1.c</u> Participant roster for career academy staff attending a week-long summer curriculum mapping workshop <i>(Schedule an additional summer institute to refine curriculum maps and focus on additional career academy models lacking maps or training.)</i>	June 2011	Not yet applicable
<u>2.1.d</u> Participant roster for career academy staff attending a week-long summer curriculum mapping workshop <i>(Create additional curriculum maps for new academies, refine existing maps, and offer introductory instructional strategies for professionals new to the career academy model.)</i>	June 2011 and 2012	Not yet applicable
<u>2.1.e</u> Career Academy Cadre list of at least five representatives from respective districts to total a group of 50 <i>(Identify and train a select and dedicate cadre of professionals from each district to spearhead the continued development and implementation of curriculum maps and instructional</i>	June 2012	Not yet applicable

Table 3—Polk County’s Voluntary Public Schools Choice (VPSC) Grant Actual and Anticipated Outcomes as Related to State Objective 2		
<i>strategies.)</i>		
<p><u>2.2.a</u> List of participants for computer conference</p> <p><u>2.2.b</u> List of best practices and issues for discussion from participating districts <i>(Share a written best practice and a challenge or issue with group during the winter meeting via computer conferencing.)</i></p>	December 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012	<p>2.2a-A formal computer conference has not been implemented to date.</p> <p>2.2.b-Through January 15, 2009 FACSA meeting committees were developed to include the best practices in the following areas: new application and appeal process, charter renewal and termination process, legal and contract, and district processes and procedures. Eight of the nine partnering districts are members of these committees.</p>
<u>2.3</u> Hard copy of website and bulletin board including web address or link <i>(Coordinate with FPSCC to maintain a web based bulletin board.)</i>	April 2009	Copies of the web site and an explanation of use and purpose are provided in the appendix. (See appendix7)

Table 4—Polk County’s Voluntary Public Schools Choice (VPSC) Grant Actual and Anticipated Outcomes as Related to State Objective 3
<p>State Objective 3. Increase the methods to improve capacity, parental involvement and academic significance for choice public school initiatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>State Measure 3a.</u> Increase membership of Parent Advisory Councils by 25 memberships the first year with an increase of 10% each year thereafter, resulting in an increased of involvement at School Choice Parent Resource Centers (SCPRC) sites and the number of volunteer attendance at trainings. • <u>State Measure 3b.</u> For each year of the grant, the attendance of Parent Advisory Council members at all FPSCC events will increase by 5% each year, totaling 25% by the end of the grant in 2011. • <u>State Measure 3c.</u> By 2011, the Parent Advisory Council and the parent volunteers at the SCPRC sites will collaboratively develop and produce a publication to provide technical assistance and guidance to parents on statewide school choice policies and issues that will be distributed at all SCPRC sites. • <u>State Measure 3d.</u> By 2011, students who participate in the school choice inter-district models will show an overall average increase of 2% in FCAT reading and math scores.
Polk Goal: Polk County’s VPSC Grant does not address State Measures 3a, 3b, 3c or 3d.

Marketing/Dissemination Plans for Year 2 with Third Quarter Activities

The following are strategies used to market choice options to the students of Polk County:

- I. Media-Information regarding application periods are displayed through local papers, news programs, and public service channels on local cable networks. The internet is also used to provide information on application periods and online applications. This address is printed on all publications and is www.polk-fl.net keyword-school choice. Application and recruitment videos are played on the local cable television network on channel 14 known as Polk Government Television (PGTV). These videos run during varying hours of the day over several months preceding and during application periods.

- II. Information Flyers-Information sheets are sent home with each student enrolled in a Polk County school via report cards. Over 90,000 flyers were distributed this year. The flyers provide overview of choice programs and application protocol.
- III. Print Materials including pamphlets and booklets-83,000 copies of school marketing materials were made available to parents, civic groups, chambers of commerce, and realtors. This material provides students with an insight to the program focus and culture of that specific school. Parent Resource Guides are distributed through the community via local chambers of commerce and other public service locations.

School Marketing Videos-Each school providing a choice option has a marketing video of 15-20 minutes in length. This audio visual presentation gives students an insight to the program focus and culture of that specific school. The videos are available to students by viewing them on the local cable network as they are played or on the internet at www.polk-fl.net under the school information tool bar.

Individual School Brochures-16,000 brochures were used by schools for recruitment within the community.

- IV. Open House-Opportunities for school tours and Open House activities are planned and marketed through the schools, newspapers, and local media and civic groups.

Polk has also contracted a vendor for development and print of marketing material. Upon completion of this review it was determined that the development and printing of this material will be completed in house at the central offices of the Polk County School Board. These tools will be circulated to the nine participating districts. For more information on the vendor see appendix. (See appendix⁵)

Data Collection/Project Evaluation for Year 2, Second Quarter

Evaluation activities during the third quarter focused on the collection of Excel spreadsheets from each of the coalition districts. These spreadsheets report enrollment by choice option for the 2008-2009 school year. Conversations have also dealt with the collection of application and acceptance lists. This report addresses both processes with current outcomes listed for coalition enrollment.

Enrollment

During April through June 2009, enrollment reports were requested from all partnering districts. At the end of the third quarter, the status of report submissions is as follows:

- Enrollment reports based on the VPSC report format have been received from Polk, Osceola, Manatee and Sumter Counties and appear to include all choice participants represented in grant activities. However, Polk is awaiting some clarification regarding Manatee's reports.
- Lake County submitted a preliminary report, which did not include students from all choice options. Lake has now updated the report but is currently addressing district concerns about transmitting individual student data to Polk County.

- Hillsborough County submitted a preliminary report in April, but it only includes interdistrict transfer students moving between Hillsborough and Polk Counties. It does not include any of the other choice options. Hillsborough has not responded to requests for a complete report.
- Spreadsheets have been requested but not yet received from Indian River, Orange, and Pasco Counties.

As spreadsheets from partnering districts are received, they will be reviewed and then verified for content.

It is significant to note that Orange, Pasco, and Hillsborough Counties have not reported career academy enrollments either through a manual count or the Excel spreadsheet report in either October or April.

A comparison of choice enrollments for October 2008, when the first annual report was submitted, and June 2009 is reflected in Tables 5, 6 and 7 on pages 10 and 11.

Table 5—Total Number of Charter Students per Coalition District			
<i>District</i>	<i># of charter students October 2008</i>	<i># of charter students April 2009</i>	<i>Reporting Issues or Concerns</i>
<i>Hillsborough</i>	4,639	Not Received	While an initial electronic report was received in April including interdistrict transfers (between Polk and Hillsborough), Hillsborough has not responded to requests for lists to include other choice options.
<i>Indian River</i>	1,400	Not Received	No electronic reports have been received from Indian River.
<i>Lake</i>	4,967	5,003	Both the October and April counts are manual. Lake has submitted the Excel report with partial data. However, charter students were not included.
<i>Manatee</i>	2,145	2,242	None
<i>Orange</i>	2,702	Not Received	No electronic reports have been received from Orange.
<i>Osceola</i>	4,719	4,696	None
<i>Pasco</i>	1,531	Not Received	No electronic reports have been received from Pasco County.
<i>Polk</i>	9,870	10,028	None
<i>Sumter</i>	2,021	1,945	None
<i>TOTAL</i>	33,994		

Table 6—Total Number of Magnet/Choice Students per Coalition District			
District	<i># of magnet/choice students October 2008</i>	<i># of magnet/choice students April 2009</i>	<i>Reporting Issues or Concerns</i>
Hillsborough	24,000	Not Received	While an initial electronic report was received in April including interdistrict transfers (between Polk and Hillsborough), Hillsborough has not responded to requests for lists to include other choice options.
Indian River	1,967	Not Received	No electronic reports have been received from Indian River.
Lake	4,967	Not Received	Both the October and April counts are manual. Lake has submitted the Excel report with partial data. However, magnet/choice students were not included.
Manatee	5,027	Awaiting Clarification	Manatee County has submitted its data in the requested format, but Polk is awaiting clarification regarding reporting codes. Initial numbers also reflect a much lower magnet/choice student count than was reported in October.
Orange	3,850	Not Received	No electronic reports have been received from Orange.
Osceola	1,201	766 Magnet	None
Pasco	0	Not Received	No electronic reports have been received from Pasco.
Polk	7,402	8,511	None
Sumter	0	0	None
48,414	48,414		

Table 7—Total Number of Career Academy Students per Coalition District			
District	<i># of career academy students October 2008</i>	<i># of career academy students April 2009</i>	<i>Reporting Issues or Concerns</i>
Hillsborough	Not Received	Not Received	Orange did not provide career academy enrollment in October. While an initial electronic report was received in April including interdistrict transfers (between Polk and Hillsborough), Hillsborough has not responded to requests for lists to include other choice options.
Indian River	1,125	Not Received	No electronic reports have been received from Indian River.
Lake	150	537	Both the October and April counts are manual. Lake County has submitted the Excel report with partial data. However, career academy students were not included.
Manatee	3,783	703	The Excel spreadsheet from Manatee shows 703 career academy students. Polk is awaiting clarification regarding the significant difference between the April count and the one reported in October.
Orange	Not Received	Not Received	Orange did not provide career academy enrollment in October. No electronic reports have been received from Orange.
Osceola	0	688	None
Pasco	Not Received	Not Received	Pasco did not provide career academy enrollment in October. No electronic reports have been received from Pasco in either October or April
Polk	*3,448	2,966	*Polk students enrolled in charter schools are not included in the April 2009 academy numbers. That

Table 7—Total Number of Career Academy Students per Coalition District			
			accounts for the slightly lower enrolment since one of Polk’s career academies is in a charter high school.
Sumter	**2,321	276	**Sumter academy enrollment numbers in October 2008 may have included all Charter Villages students. That was a reporting error as noted by Sumter personnel.
TOTAL	10,827		

Application and Acceptance

While enrollment data is collected and tracked in each district’s student data base, application and acceptance records are not necessarily included. Initial conversations within Polk County indicate that it will be possible though burdensome to merge data bases and create the requested report. However, some other districts that are submitting the electronic student lists of enrollees indicate that it may not be feasible to collect application and acceptance lists.

If these reports are required for the evaluation of grant activities, that must be communicated to all partners so that a revision in the partnership can be addressed in a timely manner if necessary.

Appendix

1. Marie Sneed, an expert in desegregation and the Supreme Court ruling regarding student assignment, reviewed current practices and choice options for students. Marie discussed issues of using race in selection criteria as well as other criteria with board members from Polk County. Additionally, policies were reviewed with regard to inter-district transfers and intra-district transfers for students. This review of policy and student assignment was extended to our primary partnering districts of Hillsborough and Osceola Counties as well. Marie spent time meeting with key choice personnel in each of these districts. The benefit of these reviews had a large impact on overall choice and student assignment in the districts. The value to students came by way of specific student selection criteria that embrace the intent of the Supreme Court Rule on the use of race for student assignment. This in turn has allowed districts to maintain and build choice capacity. For Polk County, this meant changes in selection criteria for all choice programs. This equates to 21% of the students enrolled in the district.
2. As of September 2008, inter-district agreements are in place to allow students to transfer between Polk, Osceola and Hillsborough Counties. The agreements are unique to the relationships between the districts. The agreement that has been formalized between Polk and Hillsborough Counties allows for the transfer and movement of students between the districts carte blanche. We find families using this option to seek alternative choice programs not available at their zoned schools or choosing a school close to the parent’s work location.

An example of the partnership between Polk and Hillsborough can be seen in the example below; Kathleen High School is located minutes from the Hillsborough County line. The demographics below highlight the value of inter-district transfers for students at Kathleen High School if transferring to Plant City High School or Durant High School.

School	% F/R lunch	School grade '06-07	School grade '05-06	% Minority	% student ESE
Kathleen HS	56	D	D	49	20
Plant City HS	39.4	B	B	39	15.4
Durant HS	28.1	B	B	37	11.4

The agreement with Polk and Osceola Counties is such that Polk students may transfer to traditional Osceola schools. This currently occurs via an informal agreement and we are working on a formal agreement between parties. However, there are formal inter-district agreements with Osceola County to take Polk students by way of the Four Corners Charter and New Dimensions charter. This has been a great choice option to offer Polk students as it provides the opportunity for students to access additional choice options both within their districts by creating high quality, high yield choice options or via inter-district transfer. For example, those students who attend lower performing Haines City High School or Ridge Community High School to attend New Dimensions High School, a higher performing charter school located in Osceola County. The chart below demonstrates the need to offer choices for low performing students to attend a higher performing school.

School	% F/R lunch	School grade '06-07	School grade '05-06	% Minority	% student ESE
Haines City HS	66.5	F	D	77	10.5
Ridge Comm HS	55	D	D	67	13.8
New Dimensions	58.5	D	C	86	3.1

In addition, Four Corners Charter School offers an option for students who wish to attend from Boone Middle School.

School	% F/R lunch	School grade '06-07	% Minority	% sts ESE
Boone Middle	86.3	C	74	13
4 Corners Charter	53.3	B	64	5

3. To assure that transportation is not a barrier for students participating in the VPSC program through the inter-district model; the districts work with charter schools and traditional school bus routes to assist inter-district transfer students with transportation. During the period of this grant, utilizing transportation funds, Polk County will seek to establish a sustainable transportation arrangement that will extend beyond the cycle of the grant. In order to accomplish this task, Polk County will purchase a bus and hold the title for this bus throughout the grant cycle.

Polk County assures that the bus will be used for the purpose of transporting VPSC participating Polk County students to Four Corners Charter School in Osceola County. Polk County will first create a priority for VPSC Polk County middle school students who are attending Four Corners Charter School and live within the established transportation zone to ride the bus. Any remaining seats will be filled with siblings of the VPSC Polk County middle school students as well as other VPSC Polk elementary students who participate in the inter-district model and are attending Four Corners.

Polk County Public Schools will utilize grant funds to hire a bus driver and provide the training for that bus driver. Polk County will be responsible for the salary and benefits of the bus driver, the purchase of the bus, as well as the fuel and maintenance costs of the bus using transportation grant funds during the funding cycle of this grant.

4. The needs assessment for partnering districts in the Polk VPSC project began July of 2008. Districts were asked to do a self assessment where they ranked barriers to choice in their districts. Of those who responded, program cost and transportation were the top two barriers. The survey also inquired of demographic changes that may be occurring with regard to ethnicity/race or socio-economic status. The districts unanimously affirmed this occurrence through choice/charter, title one AYP choice and rezoning. In Polk County, 28,912 students could have made the choice to move from a lower performing school to a higher performing school via Title One AYP choice, only 657 of the students, 2% actually made this choice. Since we acknowledge that the choice exists, especially for the elementary and middle school student, the challenge becomes, how do we assist parents in confidently making a choice to send their students to one of these options. Whether the decision is for Title One AYP choice, charter school choice, traditional district choice, or other choice options it must be meaningful and sustainable for the student. At the elementary and middle level the challenge has been to assist parents in making these choices and choosing appropriately based on the needs and interests of their students. As this grant continues, we will hone in on the specific, successful techniques that bring these students from low performing schools to higher performing schools. Maintenance of diversity was also surveyed and it appeared a shift in diversity may be occurring at the schools. Districts also provided feedback on declining enrollments at schools. Responses illustrated that this is being seen in title one sending schools by a subjective representative group comprised of low and middle class families. The districts had mixed results when asked about high performing charter or choice programs.

The survey results from July 2008 were further developed by district choice representatives in April of 2009. It was from this open forum dialogue that the districts wrestled again with choice options and barriers to accessing them. The group collaboratively worked to define choice as any student not attending their zoned school. An exhaustive list of over 23 varieties of choice was listed. Furthermore, from consensus it was determined that the barriers and challenges for school choice affect five primary stakeholder groups: family, community, business partners, school sites, and districts. These stakeholder groups, while each has a unique challenge, find that there are three focal barriers of concern for choice access. These include information and marketing, implementation and expansion of programs and transportation.

The summative feedback from the partnering districts in the Polk VPSC needs/barriers discussion at the April 2009 meeting were later used to tailor training session for site based choice program principals from the partnering districts in June 2009. The topics and trainings aligned with the goals of the Polk VPSC to address the opportunity for students to access additional choice options both within their districts by creating high quality, high yield choice options or via inter-district transfer as well as address the need for high yield educational options for students who are at-risk or unmotivated. As principals were asked to discuss these same challenges to choice in a session, their feedback will be used to tailor training for teachers during the summer of 2010. The vertical articulation and discussion of needs and challenges to choice from district to principal to teacher personnel is providing a common articulation that affect choice and academic options for students.

Polk will identify, obtain and disseminate materials to implement research based strategies and powerful book review activities designed to provoke thoughtful discussion and self evaluation on the part of choice advocates at the school and district level with regard to choice and challenging student populations. Self

evaluations with choice schools and/or district representatives in the nine districts have identified barriers to choice at the student, school and district level. This information has been used to develop specific strategies to address these barriers at a series of choice workshops as outlined above. Once this document is complete, it will be expanded to other districts beyond those partnering with Polk to identify and develop effective practices for meeting the needs of the school and low performing students within these schools. Based on the strategies and information gathered above, work with nationally recognized experts, including but not limited to, Coalition of Effective Schools, NACSA, FPSCC, Bill Daggett, Learning Focused Strategies to develop and implement on-line interactive training modules posted on the FPSCC website. This information may also be presented to grant partners or coalition members through printed materials, webcasts, enewsletters, videos and other marketing tools developed via this grant.

5. Clark/Nikdel/Powell (CNP) is a local Polk County public relations firm that is under contract, effective July 2009, to work closely with Polk County Public School (PCPS) staff to formulate, develop and design informational pieces to detail the Career Academies throughout the nine districts and the Inter-District Choice options between Polk, Hillsborough and Osceola counties. PCPS will be responsible for all printing. All PDF files will be turned over to PCPS for future minor modifications and sustainability beyond the funding of the VPSC grant. These brochures will focus on the following:

- Career Academies Informational Pieces

Three panel brochures will be developed that detail the specific Career Academy programs throughout Polk County. This information will provide information on Academy programs and also include programs of study, the benefits of the program, business partners and the application process. CNP will also develop eight brochures for the additional districts that will include the same overall look and general information as the PCPS version. PDF files will be made available to PCPS for future minor revisions and sustainability beyond the funding of the VPSC grant.

- Inter-District Choice Informational Pieces

With the varying information that pertains to the Polk/Osceola/Hillsborough programs, three separate print pieces will be developed that offer the information that pertains to that specific Inter-District Choice program. The first piece would be a two- to four-panel brochure detailing the schools in the Polk/Osceola program. The second piece would be a three- to four-panel brochure that would explain the transferring of students from Polk to Hillsborough and from Hillsborough to Polk. All PDF files will be made available to PCPS for future minor revisions and sustainability beyond the funding of the VPSC grant.

6. One of the most successful projects demonstrating strong initial success, although at the beginning stages, is the Performance Management Institute training that each of the nine districts is participating in via the grant. This training is designed to assist district charter school authorizers in recognizing and tangibly supporting high performing schools. The training is in conjunction with Stanford University and the National Association of Charter School Authorizers and is designed to identify high performing schools which will then have the opportunity to expand the number of seats available for choice students coming from lower performing schools as well as having extended contracts allowing for construction to create those additional seats. The training, provided at no cost for training or materials by staff from Stanford University and NACSA was piloted in Polk County this year. As a result of the initial year of piloting in one county, 642 additional seats were created at high performing choice schools.

Name of Charter School	School Grade/ AYP Status 2007-2008	Current Seats	Added Seats as a result of PMI
McKeel Elementary Academy South	B	571	517-1088 total seats
Edward W. Bok Academy	New School	375	125-500 total seats
Foundation Charter School	N/A has not made AYP in the vast majority of cells 5 of the last 5 years	67	-67*
Total # of Seats Added as a result of PMI methods	642		

*Low performing school, school will close and all students will be sent to a higher performing school.

Additionally, each of the nine participating districts is developing a comprehensive, research based methodology to expand high quality choice to all students, with an emphasis on students from lower performing schools. Furthermore, students are prepared to meet the challenges of high quality choice options by providing specific interventions at the family and school level to assure that students have the rigorous preparation and support structures to succeed in these challenging choice options. This approach is a completely different process to how choice has been developed in the past. Using technology options, the research tools of Stanford University's Performance Management Institute and a systematic approach to identifying and expanding high quality choice options a successful model that can be replicated is developed. Furthermore, by using our partnerships with the South Eastern Coalition of Essential Schools, Nova Southeastern University, the Florida Public School Choice Consortium and the Florida Association of Charter School Authorizers this project will expand beyond the nine districts that have committed to participate. The Florida Department of Education is attending the summer training and is closely following the work of PMI and the monitoring and renewal processes. Staff from Stanford University, the Colorado League of Charter Schools and NACSA the National Association of Charter School Authorizers have volunteered their time, materials, training development and travel to participate in the development and implementation of these processes specifically designed to expand quality choice for students from lower performing schools.

Nova Southeastern is hosting the grant website which will provide all of the materials developed by each of these strands as blueprints to replicate the planning processes, specific steps, related trainings, model work sheets and materials as well as support contact lists and other resources. The web site will continue beyond the period of the grant as various organizations have committed time and resources to its continued update and operation. Although geared primarily as a Florida resource with its ties to Next Generation Sunshine State Standards, FCAT testing and applicable Florida law, we believe the countless hours dedicated to the development, field testing, refining and evaluation of these processes will provide an invaluable resource to others across the nation. Specific products

include a step by step guide to develop career academies from concept to full implementation, creation of a research based, equitable monitoring and performance evaluation system for charter schools designed to expand high performing choice seats and an array of specific marketing and support techniques for students and families interested in choice.

7. Polk's VPSC Grant is located at www.fpscc.net/vpsc/index.htm. From this web site, anyone with access to the internet may read about best practices gleaned from trainings and discussions relating to school choice options for charter, career academies or choice programs. The purpose of the website is to create a resource to serve educators ranging from teachers to district personnel to access information that is helpful in a variety of ways. The website was developed with Principals, Teachers and District Administrators in mind. A review of material on the website provides Best practices for administrators and teachers in four key areas: Magnet/Choice, Charter, Career Academies, and Other Choice, resources to assist with preparing key reports and applications and Polk County's VPSC Grant Project Performance Goals and the Outcomes achieved to date. As this is a five year grant, this website will be a progressive project as more resources and information are added on an ongoing basis.

The Polk County Voluntary Public School Choice (VPSC) project creates and maintains a powerful coalition of school districts which share resources and best practices to intensely focus on increasing choice options for all students with an emphasis on low performing, disengaged and disenfranchised secondary school students. This project includes primary partnerships between Polk, Osceola and Hillsborough Counties as well as expanded partnerships to also include Indian River, Lake, Manatee, Orange, Pasco and Sumter Counties. The project focuses on assuring academic success for students via expanded district choice options, interdistrict agreements and career academies at traditional public, choice and charter schools. The project will serve two main goals:

Goal 1 – Develop and refine meaningful district choice options such as NCLB choice, charter schools, and choice schools; as well as interdistrict transfers which will impact 200 traditional public, choice or charter school students while increasing the opportunities for students to move between the districts of Polk, Osceola and Hillsborough Counties. Identify and develop solutions to barriers to choice in the three primary districts as well as the six supporting districts within this proposal.

Goal 2 – Based on national models, create a comprehensive, sequential model for the development and implementation of career academies and middle school pre academies at traditional public, choice and charter schools, currently serving 114 academies and expanding to 195 over the next five years in 9 central Florida districts.

What is the purpose of this website?

- The purpose of this website is to create a resource to serve educators ranging from teachers to district personnel to access information that is helpful in a variety of ways.

Who is this website for?

- Principals
- Teachers
- District Administrators

What does this website provide?

- Best practices for administrators and teachers in four key areas: Magnet/Choice, Charter, Career Academies, and Other Choice
- Resources to assist with preparing key reports and applications
- Polk County's VPSC Grant Project Performance Goals and the Outcomes achieved to date

As this is a five year grant, this website will be a progressive project as more resources and information are added on an ongoing basis. Please visit our website often and we welcome feedback by emailing Carla McMullen, Polk County School Board Choice Specialist at carla.mcmullen@polk-fl.net.

The Polk County Voluntary Public School Choice (VPSC) project will create and maintain a powerful coalition of school districts which will share resources and best practices to intensely focus on increasing choice options for all students with an emphasis on low performing, disengaged and disenfranchised secondary school students. This project includes primary partnerships between Polk, Osceola and Hillsborough Counties as well as expanded partnerships to also include Indian River, Lake, Manatee, Orange, Pasco and Sumter Counties. The project focuses on assuring academic success for students via expanded district choice options, interdistrict agreements and career academies at traditional public, choice and charter schools.