

# A New Frontier: Changing how Virginia Supports Educators Serving Students with Autism

## State Special Education Advisory Committee

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&

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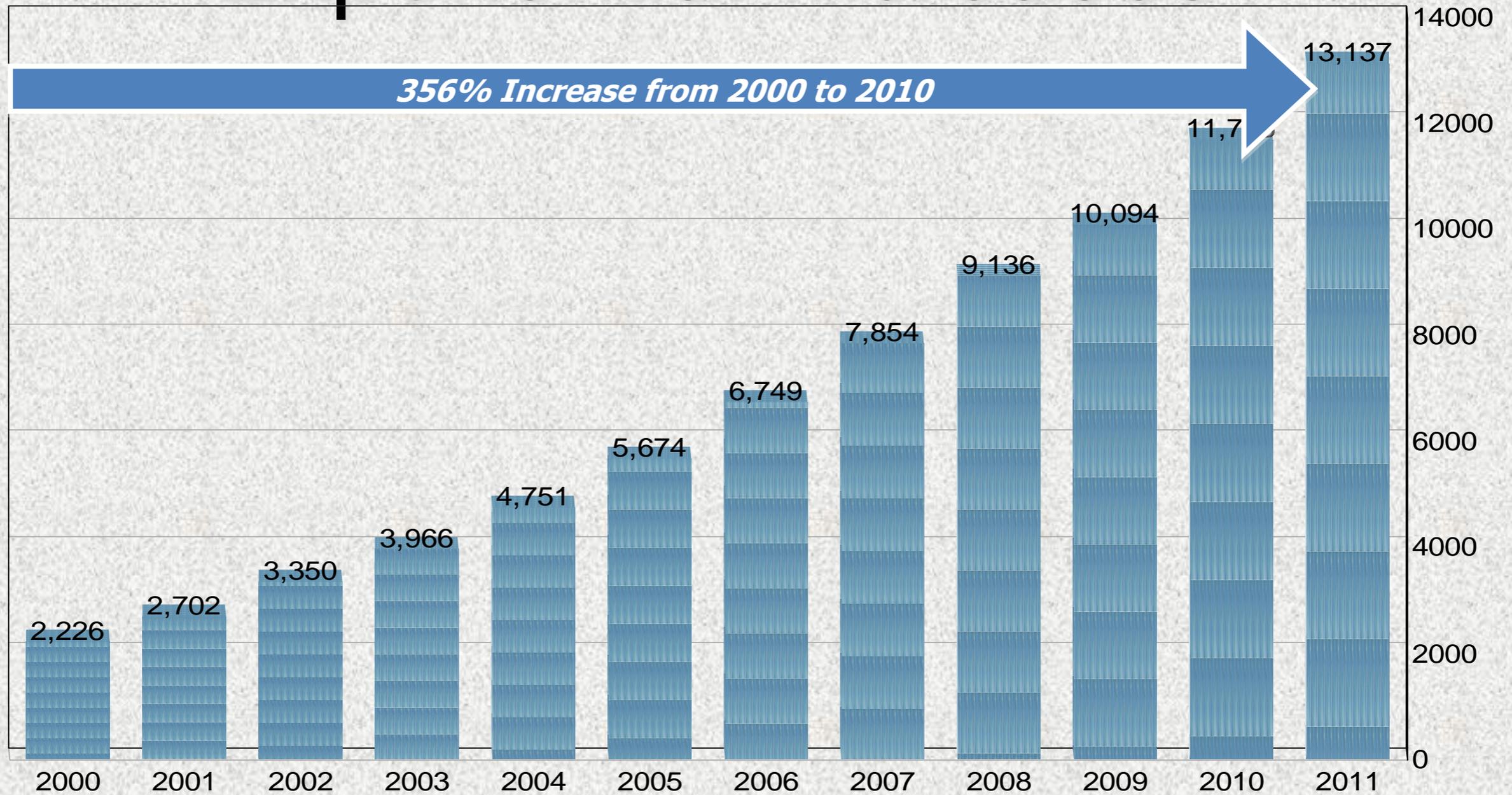


# Today's Presentation Will Address the Following Questions:

- What was the state of autism services in Virginia?
- What was VDOE's response and vision?
- How does VCU ACE increase knowledge, skills and abilities in evidence based practices in ASD?
- What are the resources for educators, including paraprofessionals?
- How does VCU ACE ensure practice to fidelity of evidence based instructional, classroom, and school wide procedures and policies?

# What was the State of Autism Services in Virginia Prior to the Development of the Autism Center for Excellence?

# Rising Wave: Exponential Increases



# Presenting Issues in Virginia

- Research: 1 in every 88 children are diagnosed with an ASD
  - Still under diagnosing and age of diagnosis still lags behind the national average
- Autism became the 4th largest primary disability category on the Dec 1, 2010 child count
  - Surpassed Emotional Disturbance
  - No longer a low-incidence disability
- Complaints, Due Process, Mediation:
  - Complaints: 40% involved children with Autism
  - Mediation Sessions: 10% involved children with Autism
  - Due Process Hearing Requests: 90% involved children with Autism

# Presenting Issues in Virginia

- Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission
  - JLARC is the oversight agency of the Virginia General Assembly, established to evaluate the operations and performance of State agencies and programs.
  - General Assembly commissioned a review of the statewide service delivery system for children and adults with ASD
  - 21 recommendations in the report that directly or indirectly involved VDOE
  - 5 out of the 21 JLARC recommendations are directed at VDOE
  - Recommendation 11 - Improve service delivery and build local capacity

# What was VDOE's Vision and Response?

# What is the Vision?

- Virginia will be a national leader in effectively preparing students with ASD to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve positive post school outcomes
  - College ready
  - Career ready
  - Ability to self advocate
  - Actively engaged and responsible citizens of their communities
  - Independent to the maximum extent possible

# Our Building Blocks

- Build a strong coalition of stakeholders
- Make significant resource investments
- Leverage relationships with Virginia Colleges and Universities
- Embrace identified weaknesses as “opportunities”
- Focus on research and evidence based practices
- Embedded approach to technical assistance and professional development
- Harness the power of distance education and online tools



# HOT TOPICS

# DSM-V

- Goal to capture more people on the spectrum (populations currently weakest assessed)
- Two types of symptoms will be required (repetitive behavior and social communication)
- All 'subtypes' classified under ASD (PDD-NOS and Aspergers) to eradicate inconsistency
- Clarifications still being made, not finalized (publication May 2013)
- **Validated** studies conducted have not seen a significant decrease in previously identified individuals no expected change in prevalence

# Legislative Mandate

- House Bill 325 Paraprofessional Training Bill. Passed in 2012 General Assembly Session and signed by Governor McDonnell
- Board of Education will approve **Training Standards** that local school divisions may use to fulfill requirements
- Details on draft training standards (Virginia Autism Council Competencies)
- Local school boards will ensure aides receive training
- Board will consult with VCU ACE to develop online training that will fulfill the requirements and be made available to schools free of charge

# VDOE Strategy

- Develop a PREMIER technical assistance, professional development and educational research center for ASD in the Commonwealth of Virginia



How does the VCU ACE Increase Knowledge, Skills and Abilities in Evidence Based Practices in ASD for the Wide Range of Professional and Paraprofessional Educational staff in Public Schools?

# Training

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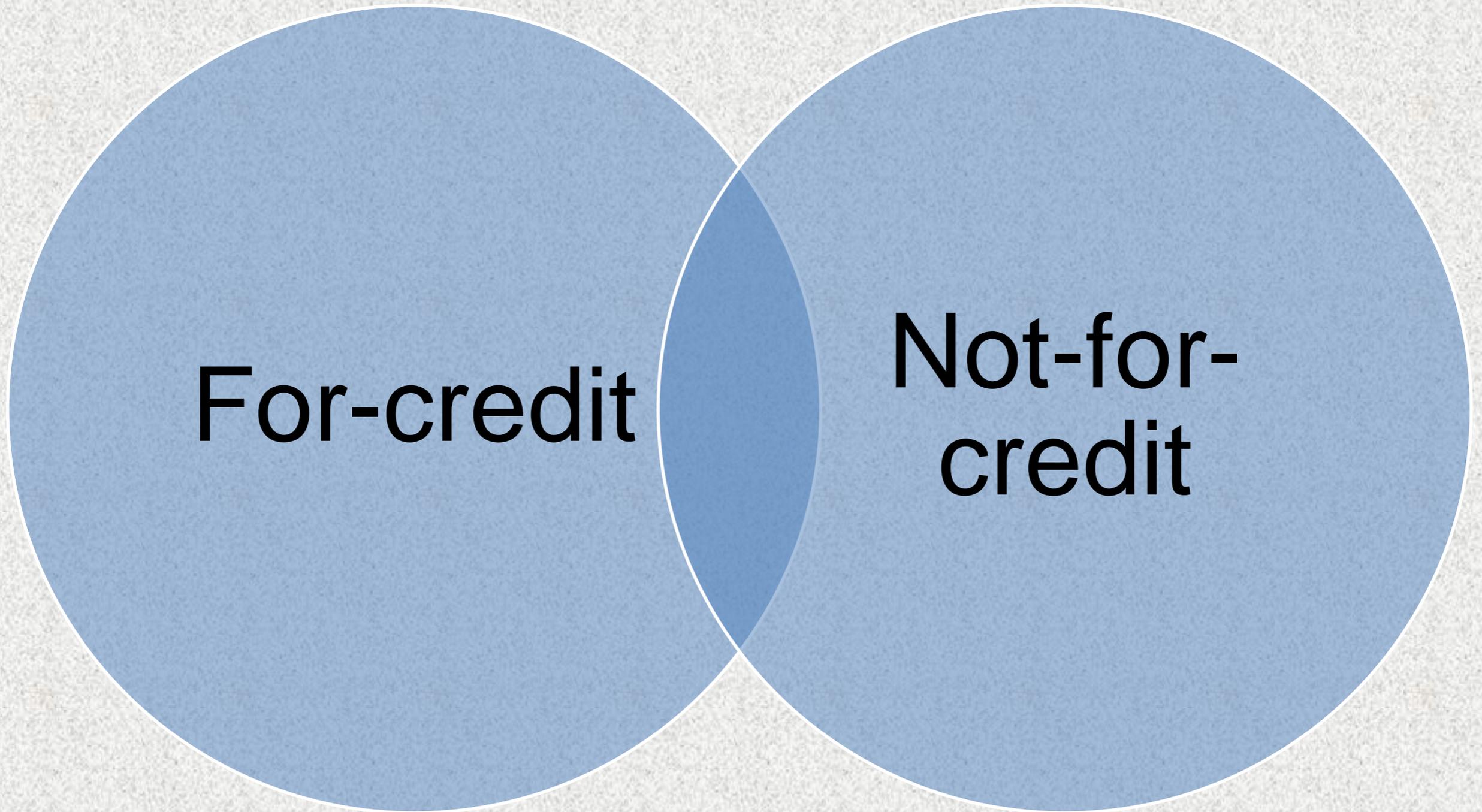


**"'Stop drinking'? — Always a simple solution to a complex problem!"**



Training

# Training



**For-credit**

**Not-for-  
credit**

# University / College Coursework

University / College Coursework  
for Credit

Coursework in  
Applied Behavior  
Analysis

Coursework in  
Autism Spectrum  
Disorders



# Certificate Programs in ASD

<b>Averett University</b> <b>Danville</b>		<b>Old Dominion University</b> <b>Norfolk</b> <b>STATE</b>
<b>George Mason University</b> <b>Fairfax</b>		<b>*Radford University</b> <b>Radford</b>
<b>James Madison University</b> <b>Harrisonburg</b> <b>STATE</b>		<b>*Rappahannock Community</b> <b>College</b> <b>Glenns and Warsaw</b>
<b>Longwood University</b> <b>Farmville</b>		<b>Regent University</b> <b>Virginia Beach</b> <b>STATE</b>
<b>Lynchburg University</b> <b>Lynchburg</b>		<b>*University of Mary Washington</b> <b>Fredericksburg</b> <b>STATE</b>
<b>Mary Baldwin University</b> <b>Staunton</b>		<b>Virginia Commonwealth</b> <b>University</b> <b>Richmond</b> <b>STATE</b>

# Applied Behavior Analysis Consortium

- 4 Universities
  - GMU
  - ODU
  - VCU
  - Lynchburg
- Begin Fall 2012
- Provide coursework and supervision in the form of practicum courses
- Tuition assistance not available

# Applied Behavior Analysis Consortium

- Year 1
  - 30 students
  - Program ran by GMU
  - ODU, VCU and Lynchburg provide sites
- Year 2
  - ODU, VCU and Lynchburg operate with GMU as a unified consortium
  - Annual cohort

# Not-for-Credit



# Online Courses

- **Foundations of ASD**
  - **Module One: Overview of Autism Spectrum Disorder and the Primary Characteristics**
  - **Module Two: Secondary characteristics, Learning Styles and Autism across the Lifespan**
- **Strategies for Supporting Positive Behaviors in Students with ASD**
  - **Module One: Functional Assessment**
  - **Module Two: Behavior Intervention Planning**

# Paraprofessionals in Autism Resource and Advancement Project (PARAPro)

- Enhance the knowledge of paraprofessionals related to the characteristics and learning needs of students with autism spectrum disorder
- Build skills related to implementing teacher directed instruction and behavioral support strategies
- Assist local educational agencies in providing teachers and administrators with guidance on the supervisory relationship with paraprofessionals

# **Paraprofessionals in Autism Resource and Advancement Project (PARAPro)**

**Online course –**

**Autism Spectrum Disorders for  
Paraprofessionals: Providing Effective  
Instruction and Support**

# Webcasts

## National and State Experts

### [Applied Behavior Analysis: Just the Facts](#)

Date: 5/8/2012

Presenter(s): Dawn Hendricks

### [Asperger's Syndrome and the Transition to Adulthood: Considerations for Success](#)

Date: 6/12/2012

Presenter(s): Gena Barnhill

### [Supporting Adults with ASD in the Workplace using Behavior Supports](#)

Date: 7/10/2012

Presenter(s): Carol Schall

### [Transition for Youth with Autism from School to Adulthood: Critical Considerations](#)

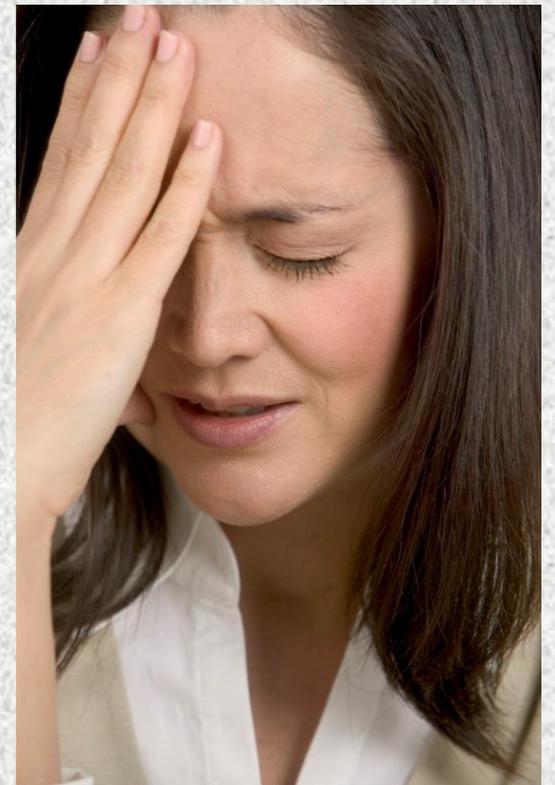
Date: 8/14/2012

Presenter(s): Paul Wehman

# How does VCU ACE Ensure Practice to Fidelity of Evidence Based Instructional, Classroom, and School Wide Procedures and Policies?



If you do what you have always done



You will get what you have always gotten

# What have we done ...

- One shot consultation
- Train and hope
- Short term consultation
- Send away to private school
- More adults
- More money
- Multiple consultants
- More Training

<b>School Divisions</b>	<b># of Schools</b>	<b># of Students Identified with ASD</b>
Arlington County Public Schools	65	337
Botetourt County Public Schools	27	71
Greensville County Public Schools	4	26
Hampton/Newport News Public Schools	82	513
Henrico County Public Schools	71	598
Northern Neck Regional Program	12	45
Richmond City Public Schools	48	211
Wise County Public Schools	15	33
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>1834</b>

# Top Down and Bottom Up



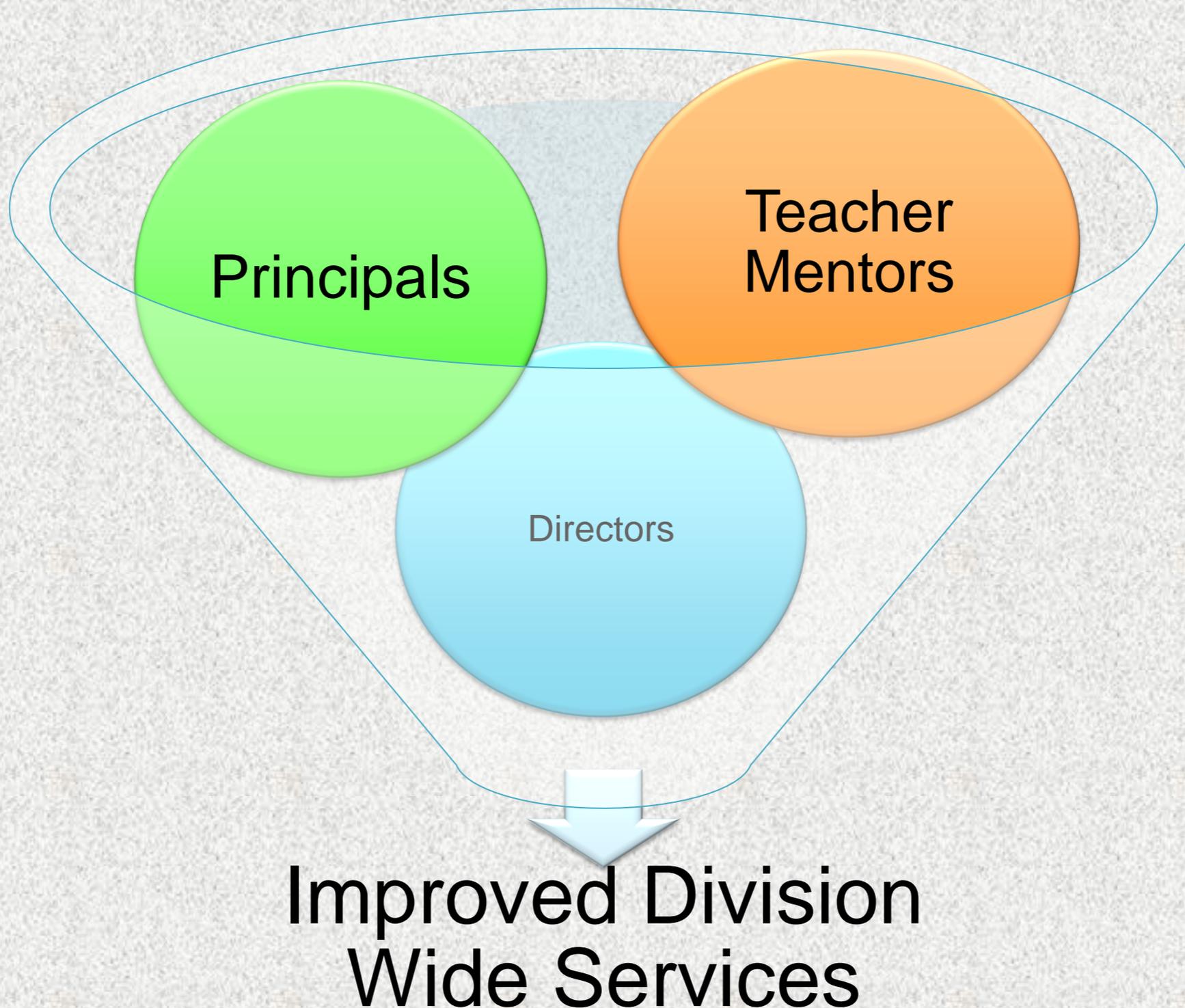
Improve  
Classroom and  
School Practice



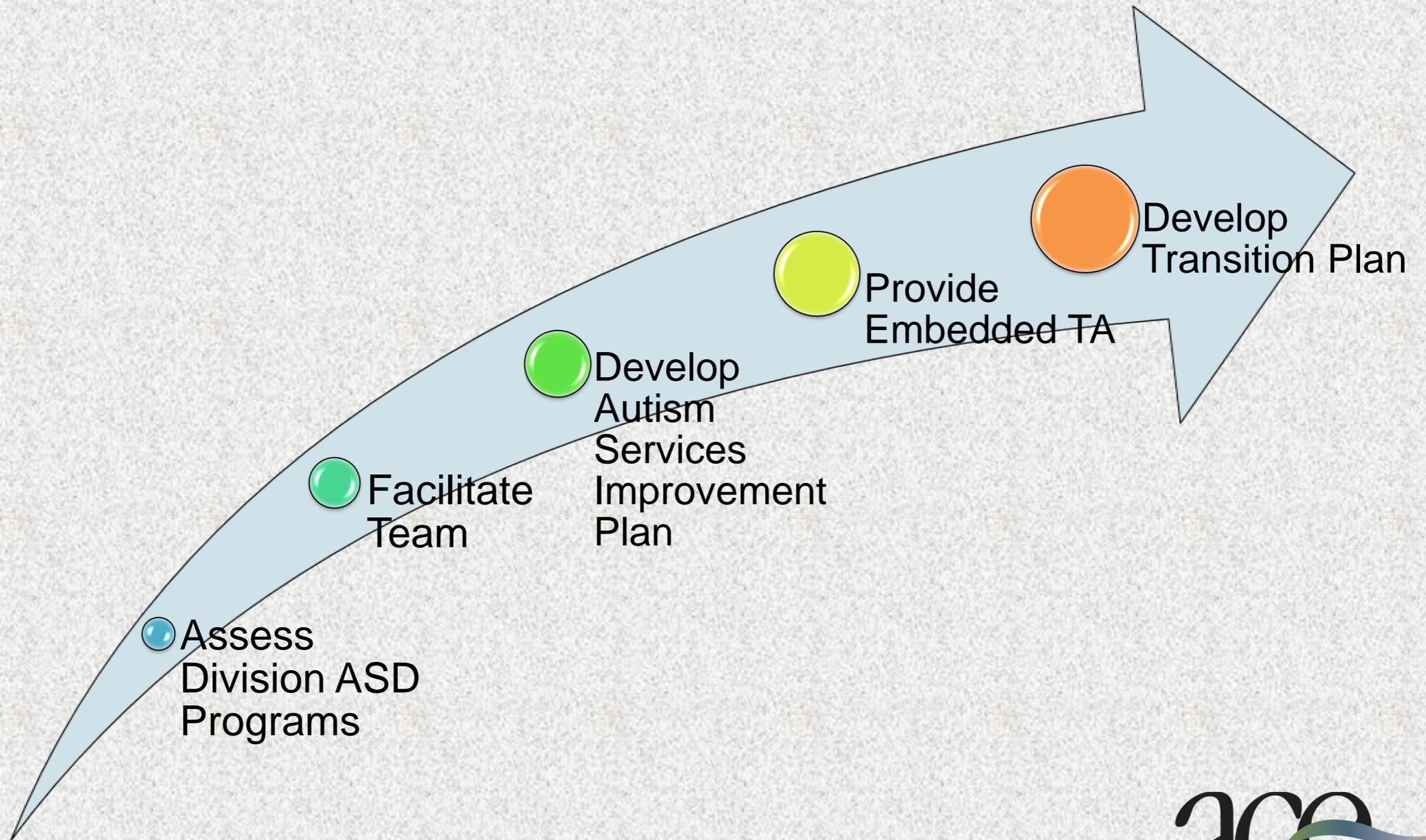
Increase  
Administrative  
Support



# Administrative Support



# Practice and Coaching



# Service Improvement Plan

- Vision
- Mission
- Beliefs
- Goals
- Milestones
- Phases
- Tasks
- Measurement

# Sample Goals from Service Improvement Plan

- Identify a scope and sequence and effective methods for teaching social skills to develop social competence in three secondary schools (one per year) within the division
- Maximize access to the instructional day by effectively utilizing supports and differentiated instruction
- Increase consistent implementation of evidence-based practices (EBPs) by all APS staff
- The average age of ASD identification will be reduced from 6 years old to 3.5 years old

# Closing Comments

- The Perfect Storm
  - Critical Mass
  - Legislative Support
  - Visionary Leadership
- The Perfect Marriage
  - University Center
  - Research
  - Training
  - Technical Assistance
  - Collaboration

# Online Resources

Virginia Department of Education Autism Resources

[www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/disabilities/autism](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/disabilities/autism)

Virginia Commonwealth University Autism Center for  
Excellence (VCU ACE)

[www.vcuautismcenter.org](http://www.vcuautismcenter.org)

# Questions

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