



## Steps to Becoming a Virginia Schools to Watch®

The process for becoming a School to Watch is an important journey for a school community to take together. The designation is important, but the value is in the learning and growth that takes place on that journey. The entire staff, students, parents, and community should be involved in the process to receive the best value from the experience. After considering the criteria outlined in the STW program, the next steps include:

1. Form a Schools to Watch Committee to begin exploration and self-examination of the school.
2. Review the criteria rubric organized into the following four domains: *Academic Excellence*, *Developmentally Responsive*, *Social Equity*, and *Organizational Structures & Processes*. These may be copied and downloaded to develop awareness and understanding among the staff.
3. Prior to submitting a formal written application, the certified staff will complete an electronic version of the criteria assessment online. To obtain access to this process contact the STW Director. Completion of the online rubric is a requirement of submitting an application.
4. After becoming familiar with the criteria rubric, begin to develop the narrative application which consists of up to three pages on each of the four domains explaining how the school functions in relation to each of the criteria within the domain. Cite specific examples within the school programs.
5. Revise and edit the narrative application to capture the interest of the STW readers and encourage their interest in your school.
6. View this experience as a self-assessment and a growth process. It will assist participants in learning more about their school, good instructional processes, and supportive relationships that lead to a strong school community.
7. Submit the application with the supportive documentation by September 14th. A PDF file of your application must be emailed to the STW Director at [jsoltis@salem.k12.va.us](mailto:jsoltis@salem.k12.va.us).

8. A group of readers will then evaluate the application and determine if the school is ready to proceed to the next step: a site visit. A time will be scheduled for a STW team to conduct a day long visit to your school to verify assertions from the application through classroom observations and meetings with students, parents, teachers, and administrators, as well as other documentation provided by the school.
9. Following the team visit a determination will be made if the school meets the requirements as a School to Watch. The principal will be notified as soon as all school visits are completed.
10. Schools that are designated as a School to Watch will then be provided with information regarding a school recognition, the National STW Conference, and the State VMSA Conference. Schools that are not designated will be given feedback on areas that can be strengthened and can reapply the following year.

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