



Focusing on Solutions, LLC

**Improving Outcomes for Organizations
and Their Stakeholders**

**FINAL REPORT
STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT
April 22 & 23, 2015
Virginia D.A.R.E. Association (VDA)**

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Executive Summary

Focusing on Solutions, LLC was engaged to provide consulting services to the Virginia D.A.R.E. Association (VDA). Specifically, a 2 day retreat was conducted to discuss organizational issues, but chiefly, to determine a plan of action to sustain VDA after separating from oversight of the State Police. The following is a compilation of work from the 2 day retreat.

Retreat Goals

The VDA Board articulated the following individual goals for the 2 day retreat:

- Define a strategy to deal with the loss of coordinator and potential sustainability
- Ensure survival of program/officers
- To present a unified front
- Funding sustainability
- Designate, in a proactive manner, information to stakeholders regarding changes
- Identify a short term transition plan
- Identify a long term transition plan
- Define roles and responsibilities

Guiding Principles

The VDA Board articulated the following individual goals for the 2 day retreat:

- Open and honest discussion
- Agree to disagree
- Dialogue about options/alternatives
- 1 person talking at a time

Review of Mission Statement

After review and discussion, the Board came up with the following mission statement:

The VDA provides evidence and research-based programs through training, advocacy, and outreach.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are proffered for the purposes of capitalizing on the work from the 2 day retreat.

- Visit the strategic plan on a regular basis. There should be accountability for those tasked with objectives and the VDA should ensure that goals, objectives, and dates continue to be valid.
- Schedule a strategic plan follow-up meeting in 6 months to flesh out more objectives and discuss long term goals and objectives, as well.
- Inform stakeholders of your strategic plan. Perhaps put it on your website as a PDF link.
- Delegate 1 person to be in charge of the communication plan. This person should report to the VDA the deliverables and dates of items pushed out. For example: May 7 on Facebook: pictures of DARE activity in Stafford County
- Flesh out your development or financial sustainability plans. If the long term goal is to have a full time administrator, VDA will need a funding source.
- Write up a job description for VDA Board Members so they will know they expectations. Include advocacy responsibilities.

Appendix A – Draft Communication Plan

The following chart describes the planned communications that the Virginia Dare Association (VDA) board or designees are responsible for or participate in. Add additional information as appropriate and modify the frequency to meet the needs of VDA.

Definitions:

Weekly – One occurrence each week

Bi-Weekly – One occurrence every other week

Monthly – One occurrence each month

Bi-Monthly – One occurrence every other month

Quarterly – One occurrence every three months

Semi-Annually – One occurrence every six months

Annually – One occurrence each year

Type of Information	Person Responsible	Distribution List	Purpose of Communication/Content	Frequency	Transmittal Method
Sheriff/Police Chief Tip Sheet		VA. Sheriffs VA. Police Chiefs	<p>To inform on a regular basis the activities of the VDA</p> <p>To provide leadership with talking points for public education/media response/branding message/"elevator speech"</p> <p>Items to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Statistics • DOT dates with hyperlink to DOT site • Hyperlink to DOT applications • Keywords: evident-based, research-based, PIRE • Personal stories of students/parents • ROI – long term benefits of prevention vs. intervention 	Quarterly	e-mail to Sheriff/Police Chief with cc to DARE officer (return receipt requested)
Facebook			<p>To inform on a regular basis the activities of the VDA</p> <p>Items to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photos of special events, school activities • Special interest articles • "Did you know?" tid bits 	weekly	

Type of Information	Person Responsible	Distribution List	Purpose of Communication/Content	Frequency	Transmittal Method
Twitter			<p>To inform on a regular basis the activities of the VDA</p> <p>Items to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dates of interest • Statistical information • Links to articles, FB or website 	weekly	
Instagram			<p>To inform on a regular basis the activities of the VDA</p> <p>Items to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photos of special events, school activities • Links to articles, FB or website 	weekly	

Appendix B – Draft Strategic Plan

Business Problem – Lack of Membership and Benefits

Goal I Increase membership and benefits		
Objective 1 Develop value for membership benefits		
Activities	Person Responsible	Due Date
Provide scholarships for training opportunities for members only		
Provide additional professional development opportunities for members only		
Offer discounts/reduced rates for State School Safety Forum for members only		
Offer discounts to DOT for members only.		
Objective 2 Communicate value		
Activities	Person Responsible	Due Date
Staff block at DOT to educate others regarding the importance of D.A.R.E.		
Communicate through communication vehicles*		
Objective 3 Enhance Mentor Role		
Activities	Person Responsible	Due Date
Develop duties and responsibilities description for mentors.		
Set standard for mentors to check in with DOT graduates.		
Have mentors work with DOT graduates to speak to PTAs.		

* see Appendix B – Draft Communication Plan

Business Problem – Inconsistent voting protocols

Goal II Establish sound internal voting practices for elections		
Objective 1 Accurately track membership votes and dues received.		
Activities	Person Responsible	Due Date
Include ballot on registration form for dues paying members		

Develop a tracking mechanism for accounting for votes and dues		
Create invoice for dues billing		
Develop form for Sheriff/Police Chief to sign off on indicating that he/she will support an officer who wants to run for board office.	Medford	5/15
Objective 2		
Activities	Person Responsible	Due Date

Business Problem – Lack of updated by-laws

Goal III Update by-laws		
Objective 1 Conduct by-law review/revise where appropriate		
Activities	Person Responsible	Due Date
Incorporate Kevin’s changes	Sanders	4/23/15
Add \$10 dues and assessments	Sanders	4/23/15
Include 7 officers: President, Vice President, Sergeant at Arms, Treasurer, Information Officer, Secretary, Past President	Sanders	4/23/15
Add election terms	Sanders	4/23/15
Fix typos	Sanders	4/23/15
Add term for Sergeant at Arms – 2years	Sanders	4/23/15
Proofread	Willis	
Review annually at State Conference when brining on new members		
Objective 2 Amend to align with governance changes		
Activities		
Craft amendment re training committee and separate account		
Objective 3 Have membership approve by-laws		
Activities	Person Responsible	Due Date

Take to membership in August		
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Business Problem – Lack of sustainability

Goal IV Develop sustainable funding sources and budget		
Objective 1 Establish single point of administrative contact		
Activities	Person Responsible	Due Date
Hire coordinator		
Objective 2 Enhance credibility of VDA		
Table booths at conferences		
Attend State PTA conference		
Explore piloting of Sr. High program out of Penn State		
Form Financial audit committee (internal and external audits)		
Objective 3 Explore additional revenue streams		
Explore/develop corporate membership programs – identify value, levels of sponsorship		
Continue relationship with Clothing Bin		
Define ways that individual PTAs, and the State PTA, can help with sustainability		
Explore collaborations local Chambers of Commerce, as well as, State Chamber (approach from long term ROI and productive workforce level)		
Explore feasibility of DARE license plate		
Connect with Michelle Schmidt - VOSAP		
Implement registration fees to serve as financial buffer: DOT – non-member \$150; member \$100; out of state \$250; member discount; multiple person discount; host agency discount		
Mentor – build team and facilitators		

Business Problem – Lack of advocacy, outreach and communication

Goal V Increase advocacy, outreach and communication		
Objective 1 Utilize social media		
Activities	Person Responsible	Due Date

Use Youth Advisory Board member for social media push outs		
#VADARE Twitter account		
LinkedIn		
Newsletter – send out regularly		
E-blasts for quick communication vehicle		
Facebook		
Establish social media calendar for regular push outs		
Set up calendar to push out DOTs, updates, stats on regular basis		
Develop sheriffs’ tip sheet		
Develop plan to enhance perception of DARE among State Leaders		
Engage PTA as community-wide/State-wide advocates		
Develop sound bites for sheriffs and DARE officers		
Objective 2 Get out ahead of potential negative release		
Activities	Person Responsible	Due Date
Issue press release: “DARE Association is now your Training Center. Gene Ayers retiring; State Police has passed the torch to the DARE Association. The next DOT training will be . . .” cc to Police Chief/Sheriff’s Association; media; Recorder Magazine/Jones	Medford	Before May 1, 2015

Business Problem – Enhancing skill levels DARE officers

Goal VI Continue to provide training opportunities		
Objective 1 Develop a strong, committed, and cohesive training team		
Activities	Person Responsible	Due Date
<i>DOT scheduled 2nd week in September after Labor Day</i>	Training Team	
Divide training logistics among training team and mentors: lodging, meals, advertising, training agendas, copies of materials, name tags, check off sheet (Gene has), DCJS credit	Training Team	
Get Sheriff Association’s blessing	Training Team	
Get tower out of Gene’s office	Training Team	
Mini DARE conference after DOT graduation	Training Team	
Send letter for DARE Association for kits	Training Team	
Designate 3 people for Training Team - 1 Education, 2 Mentors	VDA Board	
Web-based reporting for statistical input		

No workbooks if no reporting		
Update officers' files		
Build training team		
Separate account for training - stipends to trainers		
Educator – Tues – Thurs; ½ day Friday	Training Team	
Find an educator – strong, committed individual who has agency buy-in	VDA Board	
Designate leader and co-leader (Rob, Nancy, Mark, and Vincell (?))	VDA Board	
Train new facilitators – Claude Nelson, Jeff Smith		
Have mentors shadow facilitators		
Build training team (Myra Shook)		
Objective 2 Prepare for upcoming DOT		
Activity	Person Responsible	Due Date
Order workbooks (statistical report out in May)		