



Our School Community Working to Strengthen Our Practices



The district is continually analyzing data and evaluating existing programs and reforms to monitor implementation and effectiveness. This year, the district has identified five “levers” that frame the work being done in the district: Early Literacy, Algebra in 8th Grade, High School Persistence and Advancement, Data Driven Instruction and Common Core alignment.

This week, district leaders met during their monthly Peer Learning Community (PLC) meeting focused on the high school persistence lever. The goal was to identify a problem of practice under the overarching theme of improving on-time graduation rates. As part of our work around equity, leaders examined longitudinal high school data on demographics, academics, culture and climate, graduation rates by time in district, 9th grade retention rates, and student transition between 9th and 10th grade. Once the problem of practice was identified, leaders had a focused discussion regarding symptoms, causal factors and “root causes” using the Five Whys Protocol. Leaders will continue engaging in this work to understand the data trends, next steps, and identify strategies and supports to ensure student success.

Leaders and teachers have also been engaged in monthly PLC meetings and data dives focused on early literacy in grades Pre-K-3 and Algebra in 8th grade. The literacy data dive examined district data and trends in student performance by subgroup for DRA2, TerraNova/Supera, NJASK 3, and Early Literacy Interventions. The Algebra data dive examined student performance by subgroup in NJASK 8, Algebra coursework, and High School Math performance. Using the Five Whys Protocol for each data dive, leaders shared the causal factors and findings with teachers at the school level to gather feedback on how ensure excellence, high expectations and equity for all students. This on-going work by our district leaders and teachers will inform and drive the design of the upcoming strategic plan. We thank all of our team members for their valued contributions to this critical work.

A Commitment to Advancing Best Practices in Language Arts Literacy



Language Arts Literacy Supervisors Gina Dalton and Maria Fabiano are working closely with Fred Carrigg, former Special Assistant to the Commissioner of Education for Urban Literacy, to continually improve the language arts literacy curricula and district benchmarks to ensure Equity, Expectations and Excellence for all of Elizabeth Public Schools' students in their literacy growth.

In preparation for the 2014-2015 school year, Gina Dalton and language arts literacy coaches met with Mr. Carrigg to embark on an extensive examination of district benchmarks. As a result, the literacy team created new Kindergarten through Grade 5 benchmarks that are reflective of incremental measures of literacy development aligned to the Common Core State Standards, the New Jersey State Model Curriculum, developmentally appropriate literacy curricular maps, and the core reading program. These benchmarks support the foci on vocabulary development, alphabetic principle in Grades K and 1, language arts skills in Grades 2 through 5, reading, and writing.

To support this work, Mr. Carrigg joined Gina Dalton and coaches on school visits of Kindergarten and Grade 1 classes to interact with students on literacy skills and to see the curricula in action. These visits, coupled with the benchmark item analysis conducted quarterly, have been valuable in examining curricula and promoting student success. Additional accomplishments stemming from the collaboration with Mr. Carrigg included revising the language arts literacy curricula and interventions to support students in acquiring benchmark skills and the Common Core State Standards.

Based on this work, teachers and administrators received training on benchmarks and training has also been offered to teachers across grade levels on the various components of the language arts curricula. In addition to the data analysis of benchmarks, Mr. Carrigg and the literacy team examined a five-year trend analysis that was conducted using NJASK and HSPA data. This analysis has proven valuable in examining subgroup performance. The work accomplished with Mr. Carrigg continues to strengthen collaboration between the language arts literacy, bilingual/ESL, and special services teams to ensure that students are receiving the highest quality support in their literacy development.

Elizabeth Public Schools

*Equity
Driven*

*Achievement
Focused*

College and Career Readiness

Equity, Expectations and Excellence

**Assistant
Superintendent
Plans**

**Peer Leadership
Communities**

**Instructional
Rounds**

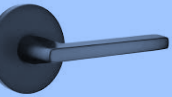
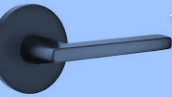
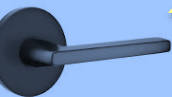
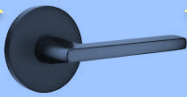
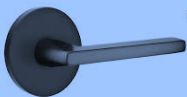
Data to Drive
Instruction

Teaching &
Learning
& Common
Core Standards

Literacy Pk-3

8th Grade
Algebra

High School
Persistence and
Advancement



Theory of Action

Core Beliefs and Commitments



Winfield Scott Earns SMMA, Boosts Profile of EPS Arts Program

Winfield Scott School No. 2 was among 120 individual schools in the United States to be awarded the Support Music Merit Award (SMMA), which recognizes support for school-based music education programs, by the NAMM (National Association of Music Merchants) Foundation.



The award is designated by the NAMM Foundation's SupportMusic Coalition, a program that unites non-profit organizations, schools and businesses and provides them with tools and resources to keep music education strong in their communities.

Each year, the NAMM Foundation seeks to celebrate and recognize innovative and resourceful music education programs in the United States. Schools are required to complete a comprehensive survey that reveals statistical and factual information about music education and related opportunities for students to learn music.

Through the support and collaboration of School No. 2 music teachers Annice Benamy and Valeri Liiva-Katz, Principal Hollis Mendes, and Vice Principal Linda Ferreira, School 2 demonstrated to the SupportMusic Coalition that their music program was worthy of the SMMA.

The SMMA received by School No. 2 is a symbol of the school's dedication to music education, which can serve as a path to life-long learning and knowledge of self and culture. Music education supports healthy social development and the quality of a young person's life, and it prepares young people for success in the 21st century workplace.

Research indicates that music education helps facilitate student academic achievement in ways such as improving recall and retention of verbal information, advancing math achievement, boosting reading and English language arts (ELA) skills, and increasing average SAT scores

The award received by School No. 2 also is emblematic of the commitment of Elizabeth Public Schools, as a whole, to arts education. The district is committed to achieving excellence in all facets of its students' education, including the arts. Over the past several years, arts programs from throughout the district have received high accolades. Additionally, a large number of the students who have been among those throughout the district to receive a perfect score on state assessments in recent years have been active participants in music education.



Equity • Expectations • Excellence

EQUITY

As a nation, America's Promise is that every child, regardless of race, ethnicity or social class, should receive a high quality, academically rich and rigorous public education.

EXPECTATIONS

The concept of high expectations is premised on the philosophical and pedagogical belief that a failure to hold all students to high expectations effectively denies them access to a high quality education, since the educational achievement of students tends to rise or fall in direct relation to the expectations placed upon them.

EXCELLENCE

Educational Excellence is defined as students performing at high levels or where students are making significant gains in academic achievement helping to prepare every child for global competitiveness.



Equity • Expectations • Excellence

Student

We believe ALL students can learn and achieve at high levels regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, neighborhood, household income or home language.

ALL Means ALL. We will narrow the achievement gaps of students by providing a high quality education to ensure that ALL of our students are college and career ready.

Teacher

We believe teachers make a positive difference in student achievement. Teachers will prepare ALL students for success in college, career, and our technological global society.

We believe that teachers are central in a child's life. Having an effective teacher is the single most important factor in student success.

Leader

We believe that effective leaders demonstrate unwavering commitment to high levels of achievement for ALL students.

Leaders will exemplify and support practices that promote high levels of achievement for ALL students.

Family

We believe that parents and caregivers are both valued partners and active participants in their children's learning. A shared sense of mutual responsibility for learning is the foundation for family involvement to ensure student success.

We are committed to engaging parents and caregivers in their children's education. We will develop a coordinated strategy that enables parents and caregivers to play an active role in building and sustaining family support for their children's learning and academic success.

Team

We believe that every member of the Elizabeth Public Schools team has a responsibility in producing and supporting high levels of achievement for ALL students.

Every member of the Elizabeth Public Schools team will make a measurable contribution to the success and achievement for ALL students by ensuring equitable distribution of resources throughout the organization.