

Contract for Excellence Proposal
Wappingers Central School District
2008-2009

DEFINING STUDENTS WITH THE GREATEST EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The Wappingers Central School District includes two Junior High Schools which were considered SRAP schools (Year 2) in ELA last year. The 2005-06 School Report Card shows that students at Wappingers Junior High School were all making AYP in Mathematics and Science, and all students, *except students with disabilities*, were making AYP in English Language Arts. Students at Van Wyck Junior High School were all making AYP in Mathematics and Science, and all students, *except students with disabilities*, were making AYP in English Language Arts. These students are now high school students and continue to need intervention services.

Feeder schools and high schools were targeted along with these junior high schools to provide a district-wide initiative for reform using 2007-08 approved Contract for Excellence funding. The program implemented in 2007-08 has a strong AIS and early intervention programs, and uses literacy coaches, differentiated instruction, seamless integration of Special Education with Regular Education, staff development in intervention strategies, technology integration, character education, critical thinking and reading/writing across all content areas.

The 2007-08 School Report Cards indicates that our junior high students at both Wappingers Junior High School and Van Wyck Junior High School are all now making AYP, using the Safe Harbor targets for Students with Disabilities in English Language Arts only. Students with Disabilities, as well as students from all subgroups who failed to meet state standards, are considered as “students with the greatest educational needs” at the junior high school level.

High school students who fall into one of three categories did not make AYP in English Language Arts per the 2007-08 District Report Card: Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, and Students with Disabilities. Secondary students are not making AYP in English Mathematics in the following categories: Black or African American, and Students with Disabilities. Students from these subgroups as well as those in other subgroups who failed to meet state standards, are considered as “students with the greatest educational needs” at the senior high school level.

Recognizing that the problem does not suddenly appear and disappear just because a student enters or leaves junior high school, it is essential to take a global approach instead of just concentrating on the subgroup identified on the state report card as the reason AYP was not met. As a result, we will be focusing our attention and C4 E resources on the junior high schools and secondary schools for the 2008-09 school year as part of a district-wide reform initiative.

PROPOSED PROGRAM:

1. A summer school program for students in grades 8 -9 will be created and implemented for a maximum of 180 students. Six classes will be offered at each grade level with class sizes limited to 15 students. This program will require curriculum development since instructional strategies will be used that are more kinesthetic and tactile than those used during the school year with larger and more diverse classes. At the 8th grade level, the goal is as much to prevent failure in the 9th grade as it is to remediate those who failed 8th grade. This will be done by integrating study skills along with the content curriculum. Summer school will target students who failed to meet state standards (especially the subgroups included within “students with the greatest educational needs”).
2. Two identical teaming schedules will be created at Roy C. Ketcham HS and John Jay HS. Additional Special Education teachers and Guidance Counselors will be added to the teams to provide support for integrated students. We will be building in common planning time for team consultation and replacing one regular section of each subject area with an Academic Intervention Service class instructed by the same teacher. This will require additional staffing. Teaming will allow teachers to track student progress and take immediate intervention steps as necessary. It will also facilitate communication between parents and teachers and between each teacher on the team. Teaming will help spread the low achieving students among the general population, provide targeted academic intervention services, and reduce the student teacher ratio to make sure these students are receiving timely and focused assistance. In addition, a new non-lab science course will be offered for high school credit (Science Across the Spectrum) that will offer a less stressful and more generalized transition into the high school sciences. Curriculum will need to be developed for this course.
3. We will create an alternative program for the neediest 9th grade students during the regular school year with smaller teacher-to-student ratios (15:1). This program will create a small learning community for these at-risk 9th graders. Students who have difficulty with transitions, large group instruction, or more traditional programs will be given the option to be included in the alternative 9th grade, providing them with a safe setting in which they will be held accountable and given the support needed to be successful.
4. The intensity and variety of Academic Intervention Services for high school students will be increased by adding supplemental classes in these subjects taught as a “lab” attached to their main course. The same teacher will teach both the main class and the “lab” so that instruction can be adjusted or expanded to provide differentiated and targeted interventions that are applicable to the individual student.

5. One of our elementary schools has class sizes of 30. Two additional sections will be created for the 2008-09 school year to reduce the student to teacher ratio and enable students to receive more individualized attention. Another of our elementary schools has many sections with up to 29 students enrolled. This school will be provided with a floating teaching assistant to provide small pull-out groups across all grade levels as needed.
6. Literacy/Reading specialists provide intensive services to students with the greatest educational needs at the elementary and junior high school levels, including those classified students who failed to meet state standards. Reading services will be provided to students at the high schools beginning with the 2008-09 school year. A Reading Camp will be held during the summer for elementary students to give them additional time on task.
7. Special Education high school students who failed to meet NYS standards in 8th grade will be given the opportunity to participate in a School-to-Work program that helps them find and succeed both academically and in a job. Students work with a mentor/advisor who supervises them on a job site that works cooperatively with the school. The students' supervisor also monitors and provides support for student academic progress.