
NORWALK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT PLAN

2008-2010



**ACHIEVEMENT
IMPLEMENTATION
ACCOUNTABILITY**



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Norwalk Public Schools

DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2008-2011

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Executive Summary

The 2008-2010 District Improvement Plan is a goal oriented, data driven, multi-year plan that identifies the specific and focused articulation of the work to be done to improve the performance of students across the District in (1) literacy and (2) numeracy, and (3) to create strong and viable linkages between the District and parents and the community.

The plan articulates our goals in these areas as determined by data analysis. It delineates the implementation strategies that will be used to realize our goals. Finally, the plan specifies the monitoring process we will use to ensure that the actual work is completed as designed. We have identified goals in each of these three areas: student achievement, district and school implementation strategies, and accountability for the implementation of the plan.

Our work is accomplished through two equal and important channels: the strategies and processes that can only be accomplished at the District level and the plans that are developed at the school level. We believe that if we utilize, in a consistent and coherent fashion, those instructional and procedural strategies recognized as having a significant impact on achievement and if we monitor and adjust this work as necessary, then we will see a positive impact on all students performing at high levels.

In addition to the district improvement plan, each school will develop its own *School Growth Plan*. This plan is the specific and focused articulation of the work to be done to meet District goals focusing on improving the performance of students in the school.

The School Growth Plan identifies those strategies and processes that are unique to the needs of the school and can only be accomplished at the school level with the support of central office staff.

The District Plan is a cohesive, coherent plan in three parts:

- the student achievement goals that we intend to achieve;
- the strategies and processes that will be used to achieve these goals, and
- the accountability strategy that will be used to monitor implementation

As a system, we will develop a high level of competency in the following areas:

- Identifying power standards
- Unwrapping standards

- Using data teams
- Using research based teaching strategies demonstrated to impact student achievement
- Using differentiated instruction
- Using collaborative teacher work as a routine part of our professional practice
- Creating and using formative assessments
- Developing District benchmarks in all content areas
- Engaging parents in routine and appropriate ways in the life of our District and schools to ensure a strong collaboration that supports student achievement.

Our plan is the work of all staff in all schools, by grade level and departments, and all of central office.

The challenge of ensuring high achievement for all students can only be met by the focused collaboration of teachers and administrators on instructional issues of urgency supported by Board of Education providing the necessary and essential commitment and resources.

The instructional issues of urgency include:

- examining student performance data to determine if all students are performing at acceptable levels;
- differentiating instruction in order to ensure that students at all levels are moving forward, especially special education and ELL students;
- teaching with a sensitivity to the race and cultural background of all of our students;
- monitoring our work to ensure we remain focused on our task.

Our Vision: Building To Be The Best

District Mission

The Mission of the Norwalk Public Schools is to create a supportive learning community rooted in the belief that all children can learn. Our educators will challenge students to demonstrate high levels of achievement on a wide variety of clearly defined standards. Our students will graduate with the skills, knowledge, attitudes and experiences necessary to ensure their highest potential for success and life-long learning.

Board of Education Goals

- We will build the Norwalk Public schools into an exemplary district characterized by a cohesive and coordinated academic system with a set of clearly defined performance based outcomes for all students. Our work as a learning community will:
 - emphasize mastery of knowledge, strategies, and skills;
 - develop in our students the habits of thinking, cooperation and self-discipline;
 - focus on results;
 - ensure excellence and equity of opportunity;
 - value diversity;
 - instill respectfulness and responsibility.
- We will actively seek the input and involvement of all staff, parents, students, and the community when making the educational decisions necessary to ensure every student's success.
- We will effectively communicate to the public our plans, progress, and successes for implementation of our goals.
- We will develop annual operating and capital financial plans to implement the strategies necessary to achieve our goals and objectives and meet our contractual obligations in a manner that is fiscally responsible to our community.
- We will develop, communicate, and implement long-range educational and facilities plans based on student needs, program needs, equity, excellence, and fiscal responsibility.

Adopted by the Board of Education – June 5, 2001

Historical Perspective

Annually since 2001 the Superintendent of Schools has presented to the Board of Education an Instructional Plan that articulates the instructional goals of a particular year. From 2001 until 2008, these goals focused principally on curriculum revision in all content areas and its implementation; the development and implementation of teacher and administrator evaluation plans connected to the work of instruction and student achievement; professional development that geared towards developing understanding and utilization of research based instructional strategies, and the development of school growth plans based on data analysis and the SMART goal model.

In November 2006, in response to the requirements of the State Education Department under the federal No Child Left Behind legislation, District staff began work on a District Improvement Plan. This plan was adopted by the Board of Education in February 2007 and approved by the State Education Department. The plan provided a strategic focus for all central office and school staff. It represented a specific agenda for the 2007-2010 school years with clearly defined goals, objectives, and strategies to be used to achieve specific student achievement goals.

The plan identified three goals:

- Improve performance in literacy, particularly in reading and writing, of all students in grades K-12 as measured by District and State assessments
- Improve performance in numeracy of all students in grades K-12 as measured by District and State assessments
- Improve partnerships with parents and community stakeholders to increase the academic performance of all students

The plan also acknowledged that, as important as the implementation of the District Plan is, improving student achievement will only occur if instructional staff in schools are committed to achieving the three goals in their daily work with students by focusing on their practice in the classroom. To this end, our administration and instructional staff must:

- Create and nurture a cultural norm that encourages and reinforces that teachers must collaborate with each other in thinking about classroom practice, assessing student work, planning instruction, and observing each other's practice;
- Align the work of the classroom around particular variables that research has demonstrated influence student achievement;
- Ensure that students are engaged in instructional tasks of high academic rigor;
- Ensure that students collaborate with each other and with their teachers in their work; and
- Continually assess the progress of students and use this information to inform instruction.
- Have a common understanding of the language to be used in our instructional work. (Appendix A).

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