

CORPORATE LANDING ELEMENTARY YEAR-ROUND SCHOOL

Year-Two Evaluation

VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Department of Accountability
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CORPORATE LANDING ELEMENTARY YEAR-ROUND SCHOOL YEAR-TWO EVALUATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In July 2002, Corporate Landing Elementary School became the third elementary school in Virginia Beach to begin a Year-Round School (YRS) program. A year-one evaluation was presented to the School Board in August 2003. This year-two evaluation focused on the progress toward meeting program goals, the continued implementation process, and actions taken in response to the year-one recommendations.

FINDINGS

- Staff at Corporate Landing addressed the recommendations from the year-one evaluation. Student opt-in and opt-out numbers were monitored, staff members at the YRS were allowed early registration for the APPLE professional development courses, strategies for improving student attendance were implemented, test data were reviewed to determine that appropriate students were referred for intersession remediation, and an attempt was made to determine parents' specific concerns about childcare.
- Teachers were required to teach at least one week of intersession during the year. Corporate Landing staffed the intersessions in various ways. Some teachers taught only one week, some taught more than one week during the same intersession, some taught multiple intersessions throughout the year, some teachers team taught, and some teacher assistants taught intersession classes.
- In year two, Corporate Landing used the Elementary School Remedial Summer Program curriculum rather than the Voyager curriculum materials that were used during the first year of YRS. Corporate Landing staff also collaborated with Plaza Elementary staff for remediation lessons.
- Students were referred to remediation intersessions based on the eligibility requirements for the summer school program. Enrichment intersessions continued to be scheduled in weekly sessions to maximize the number of students who could attend. Students who were not referred for remediation were invited to participate in at least one week of enrichment activities.
- The number of staff who left Corporate Landing prior to the second year was fewer than the number who left prior to the first year, and a lower percentage of teachers at Corporate Landing were new to the school division in year two compared to the first year of YRS. A new principal arrived at Corporate Landing in February 2004.

- The number of students who chose to opt-in to YRS from Ocean Lakes was higher than the number who chose to opt-out of YRS to Ocean Lakes demonstrating the community's interest in YRS. Overall, the process had little impact on the capacity at the two schools as both experienced enrollment declines.
- The characteristics of the student population were relatively similar to the 2002-2003 school year. The ethnicity of the student population, the percentage eligible for free or reduced lunch, and the percentage of gifted students changed very little from 2002-2003. There was a slight decline in the percentage of special education students in 2003-2004.
- Average class sizes declined or remained about the same as average class sizes in 2002-2003 except for grade five which was slightly larger. Corporate Landing's average class sizes in 2003-2004 were below or near the division's average class sizes.
- Data showed a steady increase in the percentage of students passing the grade three English, mathematics, history, and science SOL tests and the grade five English: reading, mathematics, history, and science SOL tests from 2002 to 2004. After two years of YRS, the percentage of students passing each grade three SOL test exceeded the division's passing rates, and in grade five, the passing rates for English: reading, history, and science exceeded the division's passing rates. The passing rate for grade five mathematics was slightly below the division, while the gap between the school's and the division's passing rates in English: writing was larger.
- Corporate Landing showed steady increases in the grade four *Stanford 9* percentile scores from fall 2001 to fall 2003. In the year prior to YRS, percentile scores for all but one of the tests examined were below the division's percentiles, while scores on six of ten tests and subtests equaled or exceeded the division's percentile scores in fall 2003.
- The majority of students, parents, and staff agreed that the YRS calendar helps students learn better. The majority of staff agreed that YRS helps students retain more information, provides a more continuous pattern of learning compared to a traditional calendar, and positively contributed to students' academic success. However, agreement levels were lower than in the first year of YRS.
- It did not appear that YRS improved student attendance, although student attendance was already relatively high at nearly 96 percent. Overall, most students, parents, and staff did not feel that student attendance improved as a result of YRS.
- During the three intersessions, between 41 and 47 percent of the school's population was referred specifically for remediation, and between 11 and 20 percent was referred for enrichment. Between 34 and 38 percent of the student population attended each of the intersessions for remediation, and between 8 and 16 percent attended for enrichment. It appeared that a similar percentage of the school's student population attended intersessions for remediation in year two compared to year one, while a lower percentage attended intersessions for enrichment.
- At least 93 percent of the students liked the intersessions they attended and thought that what they learned helped them in school. At least 87 percent of the teachers liked the intersession they taught.

- The majority of students and parents were able to go to planned family activities, and the majority of parents did not have any trouble finding childcare because of the YRS calendar. The majority of students felt better about attending YRS, and the majority of parents thought their child felt better or about the same going to school on a year-round calendar. Indicative of their overall attitude toward YRS, 86 percent of the parents would recommend YRS to other parents which was an increase from year one of the program.
- The majority of staff did not agree that students were more enthusiastic, more motivated, and better behaved with YRS. Compared to year one, considerably lower percentages of staff members agreed that they experienced less stress and fatigue on the YRS calendar. The majority felt that the YRS calendar did not allow them to participate in planned family activities, and nearly one half felt that they were unable to participate in professional development activities.
- The percentage of staff who liked working on a YRS schedule better than a traditional calendar schedule dropped substantially in year two, while the percentage who felt worse increased. However, nearly three quarters of the staff intended to return to Corporate Landing in 2004-2005. The percentage of staff who perceived that the staff supported the YRS program dropped approximately 27 percent in year two.
- The percentage of staff who felt that Corporate Landing was successful at meeting each of the four YRS goals was lower than after the first year of YRS. Staff perceived the goal of increasing opportunities for education through remediation and enrichment as the most successful, and the goal of fostering positive attitudes was perceived as the least successful. Instructional staff members were the least positive about the success of YRS.
- Students, parents, and some staff members felt that frequent breaks, improved student achievement, students' better retention of material, and intersessions were the best things about YRS.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Review survey data closely during year three, and consider administering the survey in the middle of the year to a greater percentage of the staff, especially instructional staff members.
- Initiate strengthened communication efforts with staff members in order to communicate accurate and updated information regarding the YRS program at Corporate Landing including sharing the year-two YRS evaluation with instructional staff and welcoming their input to the continued evaluation in year three.
- Continue to work with central office personnel to accommodate the schedules of YRS teachers when scheduling APPLE classes or other school division meetings and continue to work to meet the professional development needs of YRS staff.
- Examine students' performance on the English: writing grade five SOL test to determine strategies to improve Corporate Landing's performance so that it is at least equivalent to the division's passing rate.