

**PLAZA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
YEAR-ROUND SCHOOL  
YEAR-ONE EVALUATION**

**VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Department of Accountability  
2512 George Mason Drive  
Virginia Beach, VA 23456

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# **PLAZA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL YEAR-ONE EVALUATION**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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On November 5, 2002, the School Board approved Plaza's application to become a Year-Round School (YRS). The Plaza Year-Round School program began in July 2003, with enrichment and remediation intersessions offered in October 2003, January 2004, and April 2004. Brookwood Elementary School became the "sister site" for the YRS program at Plaza. This year-one evaluation examines the implementation of the program and progress toward meeting program goals.

## **FINDINGS**

- Implementation of the YRS program at Plaza mirrored the School Board approved time line. The lessons learned from planning and implementing three other year-round programs appeared to increase the efficacy of implementation-related tasks and facilitated the successful implementation of YRS at Plaza in 2003-2004.
- The student opt-in and opt-out process was followed, but there was somewhat of an imbalance. Forty-eight students choose to opt-in to Plaza from Brookwood and 86 students from Plaza choose to opt-out to Brookwood. An additional 22 out-of-zone students attended Plaza in 2003-2004. Opt-in and out-of-zone students represented about 18 percent of the school enrollment. Student demographics resulted in a slight decrease in Caucasian students, a slight increase in African-American students, and a reduction in average class size.
- The staff opt-out plan very closely mirrored the plan approved by the School Board. Of the staff members, 81.8 percent returned for the first year of YRS. Staff qualifications changed slightly. More teachers had advanced degrees, but slightly more teachers were new to the division and more had slightly less teaching experience.
- Staff development was consistent with the approved time line and focused on intersession planning and curriculum, student achievement data evaluation, and instructional differentiation, which could impact student learning and achievement. Survey responses regarding divisionwide staff development indicated only about one-third of the teachers (34.4%) were able to participate.
- The Year-Round School program implemented at Plaza Elementary School mirrored the approved plan.

- The childcare options offered at Plaza seemed appropriate as 85 percent of the parents did not have trouble finding or did not need childcare.
- Overall, Plaza appears to be making progress toward meeting the program goals. The staff mean ratings (on a scale of 1-5) for the program goals were:
  - To increase academic achievement-3.53
  - To improve student attendance-3.51
  - To increase opportunities for education through remediation and enrichment-4.07
  - To foster positive attitudes toward learning-3.82
- Improved academic achievement was evidenced by increases in SOL passing rates in all tests at third grade and three of five tests at fifth grade, increased percentile rankings in all five of the *Stanford Achievement Tests* at fourth grade, as well as the continued earned rating of Full Accreditation. All four third-grade SOL tests exceeded the division averages, three of five *Stanford Achievement Tests* exceeded the division averages, but all five SOL fifth-grade tests were below the division averages. Approximately two-thirds of the students, parents, and staff perceived that students learned better and academic achievement increased with the YRS program.
- Improved student attendance was shown by increased student attendance for six of the ten months, an increase in the annual average attendance, and a School Board award for overall most improved attendance during 2003-2004. Although parents and students did not agree that attendance had improved, a majority of the staff members felt progress had been made toward achieving Goal 2 and their own attendance at work had improved.
- An average of almost 52 percent of the school population was referred to intersessions during 2003-2004, and an average of 42 percent of the school population attended the intersessions. A majority of the intersession referrals were for remediation (57%), and a majority of students attending intersessions attended for remediation (58%). Although the principal and intersession coordinators reported all students were referred to an intersession, individual student data could not be confirmed as an electronic database had not been established to track student referral to or attendance at intersessions.
- The Board-approved intersession plan was changed somewhat. Adjustments were made to the estimated intersession staffing needs, and the proposed three-tier intersession structure was consolidated into one tier of remediation and one tier of enrichment.
- There were indications of positive attitudes toward learning:
  - A majority of parents (80%) would send their child to the YRS program in 2004-2005.
  - A majority of parents (90.6%) would recommend the program to other parents.
  - Many staff members (87%) intended to return to Plaza for the 2004-2005 school year.
  - Many staff members (81%+) perceived program support from all stakeholders.
  - Two-thirds of the students and staff felt better attending school with the YRS calendar.
- Staff members felt students appeared more enthusiastic about school; however, no majority of staff members felt students were more motivated, better behaved, or that parents participated more. In fact, almost 47 percent of the staff felt that parents did not participate more with YRS.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a site-based tracking system for students referred to and attending each intersession.
- Monitor the student opt-in and opt-out numbers to ensure that the imbalance does not negatively impact capacity or programming at Plaza or Brookwood.
- Continue to review ways to meet the professional development needs of staff working on YRS calendars.
- Identify methods and/or activities designed to encourage student motivation and better behavior, and more parental participation in school activities.
- Analyze 2003-2004 Standards of Learning data to determine ways to improve academic achievement that meets or exceeds division averages at fifth grade.
- Continue the year-round school program at Plaza through implementation and the evaluation cycle.