

**BETTIE F. WILLIAMS ELEMENTARY
YEAR-ROUND SCHOOL
YEAR-THREE EVALUATION**

VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Department of Accountability
2512 George Mason Drive
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BETTIE F. WILLIAMS ELEMENTARY YEAR-THREE EVALUATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In July 2001, Bettie F. Williams Elementary School became the second elementary school in Virginia Beach to begin a Year-Round School (YRS) program. A year-one evaluation that focused on the implementation of the program and beginning progress toward meeting program goals was presented to the School Board in August 2002. A year-two evaluation that examined progress toward meeting the program goals, the continued implementation process, and actions taken as a result of the year-one recommendations was presented to the School Board in September 2003. This year-three evaluation focused on the actions taken as a result of the year-two recommendations, program changes during the three evaluation years, and effectiveness of the program in meeting the goals.

FINDINGS

- Bettie F. Williams staff addressed the year-two evaluation recommendations; however, some of the same issues emerged in the year-three evaluation including attendance, wearing uniforms, and the opt-in and opt-out balance.
- The imbalance in the opt-in and opt-out numbers continued through year three. The number of students who opted-in to Bettie F. Williams each year fluctuated from 134 in year one to 139 in year three. The number of students who opted-out to NRES increased from 107 in year one to 265 in year three.
- During 2003-2004, the calendar contained the same number of instructional days as previous years, although a slight change occurred in the number of instructional hours due to inclement weather.
- Two initiatives, childcare options and wearing uniforms, were begun during the first year of the program and continued through year three. Most parents were positive about both initiatives; however, fewer students wore uniforms in year three, and some students did not like wearing uniforms.

- Staff qualifications at Bettie F. Williams improved from the first year to the third year of the program: more teachers had graduate degrees, fewer teachers were new to the system, and teachers had more years of teaching experience. Teacher qualifications did not exceed division averages. The teacher return rate at 89 percent in year three had increased from years one and two.
- Student enrollment decreased by 150 from year one (848) to year three (698). From year one to year three, there were fewer Caucasian students, more African-American students, a larger portion of students identified as gifted, a greater number qualified for free/reduced meals, and a smaller portion of students who qualified for special education services.
- Staff ratings for achieving program goals in 2003-2004 (on a scale of 1-5) were slightly higher than for year two but lower than year one:
 - To increase academic achievement - 3.05
 - To improve student attendance - 2.79
 - To increase opportunities for education through remediation and enrichment - 3.46
 - To foster positive attitudes toward learning - 2.69
- There were mixed indicators of achieving Goal 1, to improve academic achievement in 2003-2004. There were increases in SOL scores in year three in one test at third grade and fifth grade, some decreases in gaps between Bettie F. Williams and average SOL division scores, increased *Stanford 9* scores at fourth grade, and the earned rating of full accreditation for 2004-2005. However, progress in increased academic achievement was not sustained from year-two levels in some tests as there were decreases in the SOL scores for three tests at third grade and four tests at fifth grade, and increases in some gaps between Bettie F. Williams and average SOL division scores. From the baseline-year to year three, in nine SOL tests at third and fifth grades, the percent passing in seven tests increased, while two tests fell below the baseline-level. In year three, a majority of the stakeholders felt YRS had a positive impact on learning and student achievement.
- Progress was mixed toward achieving Goal 2, to improve attendance. Student attendance in year three increased for five months and for the annual average from year two; however, from the base-line year to the third year, the annual average attendance decreased. Except for students in grades three through five, no majority of stakeholders felt that student attendance had improved.
- In year three, for Goal 3, to increase opportunities for education through remediation and enrichment, fewer students were referred to and attended the remediation intersessions, although the number attending for enrichment increased somewhat. Students and staff continued to express very positive comments about the intersession activities, although staff members continued to feel intersessions had more benefits for students attending for enrichment than for students attending for remediation.

- Data used to assess Goal 4, to foster positive attitudes toward learning, indicated some areas remained positive since years one and two, while some areas did not.
 - Stakeholders’ survey responses were more positive overall for year three than for year two.
 - More parents would recommend YRS to other parents, and the responses in year three were higher than year two, but slightly less than year one.
 - More parents in year three were able to find childcare than in year two or year one.
 - A majority of parents, students, and staff members were able to participate in family activities in year three. When compared with year one, parents’ positive responses in year three were higher; however, students’ and staff members’ responses were lower.
 - Only approximately one-third of the staff members felt the YRS calendar allowed them to participate in professional activities, and responses in year three were lower than year two, but higher than year one.
 - Staff perceptions about student enthusiasm, attitudes, motivation, behavior, and parents participation did not confirm improved attitudes. A majority of staff did not agree that students were more enthusiastic, motivated, better behaved, or parents participated more, and the year-three disagreement responses were higher than year one.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Monitor the opt-in and opt-out data to determine if the imbalance needs to be addressed.
- Eliminate the practice of students wearing uniforms or increase levels of participation.
- Implement strategies to raise student attendance above the base-line level from 2000-2001.
- Analyze 2003-2004 Standards of Learning data to determine possible reasons for the declines in student performance.
- Determine if students not passing SOL tests were referred or not referred to remediation intersessions, and then appropriately adjust either the referral criteria or the remediation activities as a means to increase student achievement.
- Continue monitoring parent, student, and staff attitudes toward YRS for any appreciable declines that would warrant attention.