

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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On November 19, 2002, the School Board approved Plaza Elementary School's application to become the fourth year-round school (YRS) in Virginia Beach. The Plaza Year-Round School program began in July 2003 with Brookwood Elementary School as the "sister" or opt-out site for the YRS program. A year-one evaluation, that examined the implementation of the program and progress toward meeting program goals, was presented to the School Board in October 2004. This year-two evaluation focuses on actions taken in response to the year-one recommendations, the YRS program during the second year, progress toward meeting the program goals, and program costs.

FINDINGS

- The Plaza staff responded to all of the recommendations that resulted from the year-one evaluation.
- Of the staff members working at Plaza during the 2003-2004 school year, 80.3 percent returned to Plaza in 2004-2005. Teachers at Plaza had a lower average number of years teaching experience, a lower percentage with advanced degrees, and a lower percentage were new to the school division in 2004-2005 compared to the year prior to the program's implementation (2002-2003).
- The student opt-in/opt-out process as well as the inclusion of out-of-zone students resulted in a difference of 86 students who opted-out of Plaza. Only slight changes were noted with respect to overall student enrollment and demographic characteristics from year one to year two. Fewer students were African American and fewer students qualified for free/reduced meals.
- More than two-thirds of the stakeholders felt YRS had increased academic achievement. In addition, a majority of staff felt YRS helped students learn better, reduced the need to review, helped students retain information, provided a more continuous pattern of learning, and positively contributed to the students' academic success.
- Improved academic achievement was evidenced by increases in SOL passing rates for all of the grade 3 and grade 5 SOL tests when comparing the spring 2005 results to the results obtained in the year prior to implementing the YRS program at Plaza. The passing rates for Plaza students in grade 3 were above the division passing rates in English and science, but

slightly below the division passing rates in the areas of mathematics and history (<3%), and the grade 5 passing rates were above the division in four tests, but English: Reading was below the division passing rate by slightly more than 3 percent.

- Fourth-grade students at Plaza scored in the 68th percentile on the Total Reading test of the Stanford 10 in fall 2004, which was higher than the division level performance. Plaza students scored in the 70th percentile on the Total Language portion of the Stanford 10, which was equal to the performance of students across the school division. Plaza students scored in the 58th percentile in the area of Total Mathematics, which was below the division level performance.
- The majority of staff felt YRS improved student attendance. The student attendance was relatively high at 95 percent or above for nine of ten months. The annual average attendance and student attendance increased for six of the ten months in 2004-2005 when compared to the year prior to implementing the YRS calendar at Plaza (2002-2003). A majority of the staff and students felt student attendance improved, but approximately one-third of the parents agreed.
- Staff members felt their own attendance improved, and a large majority felt less burnout and fatigue with the YRS calendar.
- The majority of staff felt that YRS increased opportunities for education through remediation and enrichment. In fact, the staff rated this goal as highest of the four goals. A majority of staff felt the intersessions benefited students who needed remediation or enrichment. Overall, students and teachers (95%+) enjoyed the intersessions.
- All students were referred to either a remediation or enrichment intersession in 2004-2005. Approximately 47 percent of the students were referred to each intersession. This was a slight decrease in the percentage of the school population referred in the first year of the program (52%). However, the percentage of students who were referred and attended an intersession for remediation or enrichment was higher in year two compared to year one.
- Staff members felt YRS fostered positive attitudes toward learning. In addition, more than three-fourths of the staff intended to return for year three. A majority of staff perceived program support from all stakeholders, but fewer staff felt there was support from community members.
- A vast majority of parents (90%) indicated that they would recommend the program to other parents, and a majority of parents would send their child to the YRS program in 2005-2006. More parents participated in Plaza's childcare program in year two and fewer parents had trouble finding childcare.
- The percentage of staff members noting improvements in student motivation, enthusiasm, and behavior increased during the second year of the program when compared to the first year of the program. Although nearly two-thirds of the staff indicated that student behavior

improved as a result of the YRS calendar, the number of students referred for discipline issues and the number of discipline incidents increased during 2004-2005.

- The operating costs for YRS and the intersession costs for 2004-2005 were compared with projected costs. The operating cost for communication was less than projected. Projections did not include operating costs for transportation or staff contract extensions. The intersession costs for intersession personnel and materials were less than projected.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to monitor the student opt-in and opt-out numbers and encourage students to opt-in to Plaza from Brookwood to establish a balance in the enrollment for both schools.
- Continue to monitor the discipline referral data during year three and continue to implement strategies designed to improve student behavior.
- Continue to analyze the Standards of Learning (SOL) and Stanford 10 data to determine ways to improve academic achievement in order to meet or exceed the division passing rates and/or percentile rankings.
- Continue the year-round school program at Plaza through implementation and the evaluation cycle.