

**Executive Summary
Annual Evaluation of Federal and State Program
Goals and Objectives
Included in the Consolidated Application
Fiscal Year 2003-2004**

Christina School District



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Section I: Executive Summary

Purpose of Evaluation

Each year, the Christina School District (CSD) applies for supplementary funds from federal and state grants that augment our local offerings by providing more intensive programs and services for our children. Some of the programs help our children to read and write better. Other programs help our children in mathematics, science and social studies or teach them about the hazards of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Some grants allow us to pay for after-school, summer school tutoring and professional development -- still others make possible the purchase materials and extra supplies. To obtain these funds, we submit a consolidated application to the Delaware Department of Education (DOE) for approval. This application includes a district-level improvement plan based on school-level improvement plans. The district plan explains what we want to do with the funds, how we want to do it and what we expect to happen as a result of these programs and services. This report presents the evaluation of the Christina School District's progress in carrying out its 2003-2004-improvement plan.

Description of "What was Evaluated"

The information (data) utilized to evaluate our plan came from many sources and was analyzed as group data only (grade levels and districtwide averages). No individual student records are shown and each student's privacy was protected. In most cases, we looked at the outcome from different student populations that are part of the Christina student body including: racial/ethnic groups, genders, students with/without disabilities, students with and without English proficiency and income level. This type of review helps us to identify gaps and to eliminate them so that 'no child or group is ever left behind.' We examined progress in academic performance, student behavior, health-related information, staff professional improvement, vo-tech preparation for participation in society and home-school partnerships.

Data Collection Methods and Sources

The data needed to evaluate the programs funded through the 2003-2004 Consolidated Application came from a variety of sources: (1) district-level state mandated reports, (2) *School and District Profiles 2004*, (3) Delaware Student Testing Programs, (4) individual site-based data, principal and teacher reports and retrospective evaluations, (5) district committee reports, (6) Board of Education presentations, (7) reports supplied by consultants and (8) information and analyses provided by the Data Service Center. Most of the information is based on a combination of state achievement testing, district records, anecdotal information, interviews with central staff, program and service managers, minutes, schedules, and the *Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Abuse Among Delaware Students 2003* (University of Delaware, June 2004).

The information in this report is outcome based and descriptive in nature. We examined the differences between our level of expectation (sometimes referred to as the standard of acceptable performance or criteria of success) and the actual outcome. This helped us to conclude if our objectives had been completely attained, partially attained or not attained. The definition of attaining an objective was refined as follows: (1) Completely Attained -- outcome meets or exceeds annual target, (2) Partially Attained -- outcome exceeds the FY03 outcome but is less than the FY04 target, and (3) Not Attained -- FY04 outcome is less than the FY03 outcome. Determining progress within goals resulted from examining the collective outcomes of each goal's component objectives.

Major Findings Conclusions and Recommendations

A. Has the Christina School District student achievement improved? **PARTIALLY ATTAINED -- CONTINUED SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT.**

Overall, the district met both its Adequate Yearly Progress and State Progress requirements and was rated Commendable, Not under District Improvement Status. Across all benchmark grades, more than half of our students met or exceeded state standards in the basic core subjects. In mathematics, 56.7% (N=5560) of our students met or exceeded state standards. In reading, 70.9% (5291) met or exceeded standards. In writing, 66.2% (N=5565) successfully met or exceeded state standards. In mathematics and reading, the results were approximately the same as the previous year. In writing, more students met or exceeded state standards than previously when 52.8% attain proficiency. We then examined achievement in depth by determining (1) the extent that districtwide achievement targets were attained as measured by DSTP 1, (2) the amount and direction of DSTP 1 changes from the prior year, (3) comparison to statewide DSTP 1 averages for the current year, (4) 3-year aggregated data trends for each core DSTP 1 benchmark grade and subject, and (5) disaggregated data outcomes for reading, mathematics and writing for 2003-2004.

- Grades 3, 5, and 10 showed improvement between the 2003 and 2004 administration of the DSTP. The annual target for all children in writing was met; in mathematics, the target was partially met. Increases in the percentage of students who met or exceeded state standards for 12 of 20 comparisons were noted since the FY04 outcome exceeded those in FY03. These included: grade 3 reading, writing and mathematics; grade 4 social studies; grade 5 reading, writing and mathematics; grade 8 writing; grade 10 reading, writing and mathematics; and, grade 11 science.
- Grade 3 reading, writing and mathematics and grade 11 science and social studies were at or above the state averages in terms of the percentage of students who attained Proficiency Level 3 or above. Fourteen of 20 three-year aggregated data trends were upward (grades 3, 5, and 10 for mathematics, reading and writing; grade 4, 6, 11 for social studies; grade 8 for writing; and, grade 11 science). At each benchmark grade for both reading and mathematics, the national percentile rank of the average has increased substantially in the lower grades and more moderately in the upper grades from the initial administration of the DSTP in 1998. This suggests improvement in comparison to a national or norming sample of age-grade peers.
- There were several positive findings among our children with disabilities. In reading and writing, grade 3 students with disabilities achieved state standards more frequently than their age-grade peers throughout Delaware. In grades 5, 8 and 10 a higher percentage of children with disabilities met or exceeded state standards in FY04 than FY03. Similar finding for mathematics proficiency were attained in grades 3, 5, and 10.
- For grades 3 and 5 Title I reading, mathematics and writing participants, the percentage of students attaining state standards continued to improve and were higher this year than the previous 2 years.
- There were significant improvements from the FY03 evaluation in the percentage of Voc-tech students who met or exceeded Performance Level 3 on the DSTP assessments.
- The school-year Extra Time and summer school data suggests that these components provided services that resulted in improved student learning and achievement, thus contributing to Goal A. Many children who were below standards met or exceeded standards by either the spring DSTP test administrations or by summer's end; others

improved their standing and with appropriate follow-up (Individual Improvement Plans) may meet standards when they retake the DSTP 1 in April 2005.

Positive progress was made across several achievement related activities and processes. All schools continued to have building level plans for the effective use of technology. These procedures were integrated with their SIP and target objectives. Amounts of teacher daily PC use for instructional planning and/or teaching and previous levels of staff proficiency were maintained. In addition, each school had a shared decision-making component as evidenced by site council minutes and referenced in their annual evaluations. Parent participation data revealed that the district efforts to increase involvement were effective and the number of PTA members increased.

The current achievement outcomes continue to suggest the following: First, there are still a substantial number of students in all grades and many groups who have yet to attain state and local standards. Second, DSTP 1 achievement gaps between groups and grade levels appear to increase over time. Attaining consistent progress in all core areas as students move throughout schooling continues to be challenging in Christina and across Delaware. Unless the gaps between the lowest and highest performing groups close and there is continuous improvement of all students, the district "average" or proficiency will not significantly improve. As the annual intermediate targets increase, the "slope will be increasingly more difficult to climb" for those groups who continue to struggle. This will inhibit adequate yearly progress and increase the difficulty of attaining the requirements specified in the NCLB Act.

Therefore, all of our schools must continue to work toward 100% proficiency in reading/language arts and in mathematics. The accountability environment offers continuous challenges not respites. For all grades and groups, the fabric of student proficiency requires annual adjustments, alterations and repairs. Consequently, implementation of research based strategies, early identification of and interventions based on scientific research for at-risk students, intensive exposure to tutoring, extra-instructional time, and continuous monitoring of student outcomes should continue to be the focus for those who are likely to achieve less from schooling. Those who are currently at the highest point of the local achievement distribution also must continue to progress. Other recommendations are provided in the report.

**B. Has CSD Expanded and Enhanced Intervention Delivery Systems for Students?
PARTIALLY ATTAINED -- SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT NOTED.**

There were 7 objectives listed in the *Consolidated Application 2003-2004* for Goal B organized around: student progress through coordinated interventions, student health, professional development, school climate/student behavior, and district dropout and graduation rates.

The activities associated with this goal included joint training opportunities for combined school and agency staff, purchase and dissemination of violence prevention instructional materials, special assemblies, presentations and programs designed to reinforce classroom drug and violence prevention instruction. Primary services focused on providing intervention team and counseling services to students, and implementing Student Assistant Referral Team (START) training to support intervention processes.

- Beginning in FY05, the district will begin to shift its computer operations toward utilizing common statewide systems and resources. The Director of Student Support Services has initiated contact with the district's Technology Department that will result in a new student tracking system with backup capabilities that will prevent future occurrences of lost data and access to programmatic information.

- In health education, substantial numbers of students met local standards as measured by course marks. In grades 7-12, eight of every ten students continued to earn satisfactory course marks.
- Christina attained its annual dropout reduction target, a 1-percentage point reduction and the district attained its annual graduation-rate-increase target.
- Although all schools were safe as defined in NCLB during FY04, the suspension and arrest indicators continued to send mixed signals that warrant closer monitoring. The data suggests that the increases in codes 19 (Possession of Dangerous Instrument from 11 to 22), 32 (Fighting from 788 to 809), and 57 (Possession of Weapons from 39 to 50) were the key offenses that contributed to the overall rise. Other categories were either about the same or showed modest reductions from their FY03 levels.
- Student reported use of alcohol, tobacco and other substances were somewhat higher in grades 5 and 8 than in grade 11.
- A new student data tracking system that links demographic information, program participation, district inputs, student outcomes, and costs is a potentially powerful tool for effective decision making and systematic program improvement. It has the potential for determining what is working while providing a rational basis for change. Rebuilding this system should provide for periodic school based reports that may assist school improvement teams in their efforts. In addition, linkages with the *Superintendent's Performance Targets* should be possible thus providing information to parents and the Christina Community.
- Underlying factors leading to student perception of diminished safety and positive school climate as reported in the *Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Abuse Among Delaware Students* (University of Delaware, 2003) continue to require attention. To what extent are these student reported perception anchored in reality? Research in relationships between perception and reality suggests that the need for verification by examining external corroborating data before acting upon outcomes. Should verification occur, services and procedures for addressing these situations will be necessary.

Additional Recommendations

- Monitor decisions, programmatic changes and implementation of new initiatives; and examine links between new strategies, outcomes and underlying factors on both district and school levels. If performed over time, this process provides for the most rational targeting of resources within schools and across the district.
- Continue to provide professional development about data interpretation, testing, assessment, evaluation and instructional strategies at the school level. This is important for two reasons: (1) NCLB requires an understanding and use of scientifically based research in the selection, implementation and evaluation of programs, strategies and services, and (2) Standards-based environments, presuppose that factors which may influence or moderate the effects of implemented strategies and services upon outcomes should be examined on a continuous basis. Together, this rationale suggests the utility of conducting school level action research. Faculty selected topics in which staff formulate questions, collect and review the data and examine outcomes would provide a level of comprehension and empowerment for local improvement and the district as a whole. Other recommendations are provided in the report.