

**Executive Summary  
Evaluation of Federal and State Program  
Goals and Objectives  
Included in the Consolidated Application  
Fiscal Year 2006-2007**

**Christina School District**



**November 2007**

**Dr. Lillian M. Lowery, Superintendent**

## **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 (DDOE) 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 2006-2007-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, vocational-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 2006-2007 Consolidated Application came from a variety of sources: (1) district-level state mandated reports, (2) *School and District Profiles 2007*, (3) Delaware Student Testing Programs, (4) individual site-based data, (5) district committee reports, (6) Board of Education presentations, (7) reports supplied by consultants, and (8) information and data reports provided by the Districts Technology Service Department. Most of the information is based on a combination of state achievement testing, district records, parent focus group information, interviews with central staff, program and service managers, schedules, and the *Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Abuse Among Delaware Students 2006* (University of Delaware, May 2007) report.

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 FY06 outcome but is less than the FY07 target, and (3) Not Attained -- FY07 outcome is less than the FY06 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 – Improvement continued in some areas but there was slippage in the District AYP Rating for FY07.*

The Christina School District has made progress as it continuously refines its comprehensive improvement plan based on a renewed district vision, mission and previous annual evaluations. The district has retained two primary goals: (1) improving student achievement and (2) improving school climate and student health and behavior.

Of the 20 objectives that comprised the district's improvement plan, 15 (75.0%) were fully or partly attained, 4 (20.0%) were not attained, 1 (5.0%) was postponed/undetermined due to either local conditions during FY07 or awaiting DDOE data. Ultimately, continued incremental progress within these goals will result in consistently positive outcomes.

The district experienced slippage in the FY07 Accountability outcomes. It was **Below target** in Adequate Yearly Progress and State Progress requirements and was therefore rated as Academic Review, Not under District Improvement Status. In the elementary grades categories with 40 or more students (N = 16 cells locally), 88% of the categories (14 of 16 cells) met or exceeded the target. In the middle grades categories with 40 or more students (N = 16 cells locally), 50% of the categories (8 of 16 cells) met or exceeded the target. In both of these grade level clusters, unmet cells did not qualify through the Safe Harbor provision of NCLB. In the high school grade category with 40 or more students (N = 16 cells locally), 25% of the categories (4 of 16 cells) met or exceeded the target. This was a sharp decline from FY06 when 50% of the cells met or exceeded the AYP targets.

Across all of the original benchmark grades (3, 5, 8, and 10), approximately 68% (N = 15,885) of our students met or exceeded state standards in the basic core subjects. We then examined achievement in depth by determining (1) the extent that districtwide achievement targets were attained as measured by DSTP, (2) the amount and direction of DSTP changes from the prior year, (3) comparison to statewide DSTP averages for the current year, (4) 5-year aggregated data trends for each DSTP benchmark grade and core subject, and (5) disaggregated data outcomes for reading, mathematics and writing for 2006-2007.

**Strengths:** Across DSTP reading assessments for the original benchmark grades, of the 5044 students tested, 75.0% students met or exceeded state standards. [Note: For the expanded program, grades 2 through 10, 75.2% (N = 11,420), were proficient.] On the DSTP mathematics assessments (grades 3, 5, 8 and 10), of the 5,446 students tested, more than half (60.9%) of the students met or exceeded state standards. [Note: Across all grades tested, 2 through 10, 63.0% (N = 12,361) were proficient.] In writing, 68.5% of the 5,395 students tested in grades 3, 5, 8 and 10 met or exceeded state standards. [Note: Across all grades 3 through 10, 63.7% (N = 10,787) were proficient.] Across the all grades tested, the district's language arts proficiency, 74.0% (N= 11,420) exceeded the FY07 statewide language arts intermediate target, 68% by 6 percentage points. Similarly, in mathematics, the statewide intermediate target, 50%, was exceeded locally by nearly 13-percentage points (63.0%).

Sixty-eight percent (N = 1630) of the grade 1 students were at DIBELS Benchmark status at the end of the FY07 school year. This was higher than the FY06 outcome when 64% (N = 1546) attained DIBELS Benchmark status.

In comparison to statewide same grade averages, FY07 local reading performance was higher in grade 3 (82.8% verses 81.2%). Locally in grade 5, the number of students who met or exceeded state standards improved from 78.8% to 81.4%.

Maintaining or increases in the percentage of students who met or exceeded state standards for 10 of 20 comparisons were noted where the FY07 outcomes exceeded those in FY06. These included: grade 3 mathematics and writing, grade 4 social studies; grade 5 reading, writing and mathematics, grade 6 social studies; grade 8 writing and science; and grade 11 science.

Grade 3 reading, writing and mathematics continued above the state averages in terms of the percentage of students who attained Proficiency Level 3 or above. Twelve of 20 five-year aggregated data trends were upward (grades 3 and 8 for mathematics, reading and writing; grade 4 social studies; grade 5 mathematics, reading and writing; grade 6 science; and grade 8 science. At each grade (3, 5, 8, and 10) in both reading and mathematics the national percentile rank of the average has increased substantially from the initial administration of the DSTP in 1998. This suggests improvement in comparison to a national or norming sample of age-grade peers.

With respect to the *Superintendent's Targets*, the writing objectives were attained for grades 3, and partially attained in grades 5 and 8. Grade 6 also demonstrated increased proficiency in FY07 in

comparison to FY06. In grades 5 and 8, targeted low performing groups (e.g. Special Education, Low Income, and English Language Learners) attained or partially attained their FY07 objectives. Collectively, these groups averaged a higher percentage of students who met or exceeded state writing standards in FY07 than in FY06.

In grades 5, 8, and 10 targeted low performing African American and English Language Learners attained or partially attained their FY07 objectives; a higher percentage of students who met or exceeded state writing standards in FY07 than in FY06.

In science, grades 8 and 11 had higher percentages of students who met or exceeded state standards in FY07 than in FY06.

There were several positive findings among children with disabilities in the lower grades. Locally, students with disabilities in grades 2, 3, and 4 attained reading standards more frequently than other age-grade peers with disabilities throughout the state; grade 8 was virtually the same as the statewide average. In grade 2, 68.2% attained state standards in reading (statewide average was 58.3%). In grade 3, 64.1% met or exceeded state standards (statewide average was 57%). Grade 4, 64.7% met or exceeded state standards (statewide average was 59.1%).

**Note concerning Title I Service and Data Analyses:** *Christina schools that are authorized Title I funds are “school-wide programs.” This option permits the use of funds to upgrade the entire educational program of high-poverty schools. Consequently, all children attending a school-wide program school are considered to be participants and are included in the Title I achievement analyses.*

*Some Title I Schools throughout Delaware are classified as Targeted Assistance Schools (TAS). A TAS may not meet the federal criterion for high percentage of poverty that a school-wide program must meet, or, if they do, their school district has elected to maintain them as a TAS. As a TAS services may only be provided to Title I students rather than the entire school. The statewide Title I analyses includes all children in school-wide program schools AND Title I participants in Targeted Assistance Schools. This is applicable to all Title I data analyses reported in this document.*

In some grades for Title I reading, mathematics and writing in school-wide program schools, the percentage of students attaining state standards continued to improve. In reading grades 3, the district Title I averages (79.6%) exceeded their age-grade Title I peers across Delaware (statewide average was 77.6%). In writing, grades 4 and 6 results (50.2% and 68.8%), exceeded the statewide proficiency levels of 47.9% and 65.8% respectively. In mathematics, the district’s grade 3 outcome (76.2%) was slightly greater than the statewide average (73.7%) for those who met or exceeded state standards.

Information from the district’s student data files provided GPAs associated with Career Technical Pathways. Districtwide, 84.9% (N = 281) of pathway participants completing 3 Voc-tech related credits earned a GPA of 2.0 or higher.

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 1. Some 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 take the DSTP in March 2008.

The grade 8 Technology Literacy Requirement was addressed through several semester-based computer skills courses offered for middle school students. The courses vary from Introduction to Technology Education to more advanced offerings such as Computer Applications and Advanced Computer Technology. The initial analysis indicated that across all grade 8 groups and types of courses, 94.2% (N = 1619) met or exceeded course standards.

The ELL Parent participation objective was partially attained. Although somewhat less than 10% of the parents of intensively served ELL students (N = approximately 600) participated in educational programs, the intensity of the programs, documentation and results merit recognition.

**Areas that require Strengthening:** Across DSTP reading assessments grades 2-10, of the 11,420 students tested, 75.2% students met or exceeded state standards. This was slightly lower than the previous year (75.7%); however this achievement level has been virtually the same for the past three years. Reading comprises 90% of the Language Arts indicator, one of the key component of the AYP determination. Consequently, while the current level will enable the district to meet state targets for all students category until 2009, continuous improvements are needed if the district is to meet increasingly higher state targets in 2010 and beyond. Similarly, all core subjects, e.g., writing and mathematics, science and social studies, reduction in the number of students scoring in PL1, and increases in the State Progress Indicator continue to require effort so that all children will meet or exceed state standards by 2013-2014.

As documented in previous evaluations, there are wide variations in proficiency within and between grade levels and schools. The lower grades continued to be more successful in reading, mathematics; and, writing has improved in grades 3 through 6. The upper grades proficiency in writing was somewhat better previously but progress has been somewhat muted or declined in grades 7, 9 and (sharply in) 10. Perhaps the most reliable appraisal is provided by DSTP multi-year trend data in the original benchmark grades. Examining the proficiency level among age-grade peers over time for each core subject (reading, mathematics, writing, science and social studies) suggests that grade 10 reading, writing and mathematics continue to require significant academic intervention. In addition, examination of 5-year trend data in science suggests that greater proficiency continues to be attained in grades 4 and 6 rather than grades 8 and 11. Overall, proficiency in grades 8 and 11 science continues well under 50%. Social Studies outcomes in all benchmark grades continue to lag with minor fluctuations that are most likely due to differences in the composition of annual samples rather than solid progress.

For the past two years the district has not met the statewide target for English Language Learners (ELLs). This merits attention. Districts that do not meet their AMAOs for two consecutive years are required to develop an improvement plan for English Language Learners (ELLs) and ensure that it is implemented and conducted in a manner that will enhance the probability of attaining their AMAO's.

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. There are continuing gaps between minority and majority students, students with and without disabilities, English speaking students and English Language Learners and Economically Disadvantaged and Advantaged students. Second, DSTP achievement gaps between groups and grade levels continue to increase over time. Attaining consistent progress in all core areas as students move from year to year continues to be challenging in Christina and across Delaware. Unless the gaps between the lowest and highest performing groups close higher and there is continuous improvement of all students, the district "average" or proficiency will not significantly advance. 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. This will require massive intensive attention to those students scoring in PL1 and PL2. Consequently, early identification of and interventions based on scientific research for at-risk students, implementation of research based strategies, intensive exposure to tutoring, extra-instructional time services, 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.

**B. Has CSD Improved school climate, student health and behavior?** *Partially Attained --strategic progress and implementation of targeted services noted in some areas; other progress remained static or constrained.*

There were 4 objectives listed in the *Consolidated Application 2006-2007* for Goal 2 organized around: expanded services related to health and wellness, reduction in ATOD incidents, reduction in time gaps between suspension/expulsion and alternative placement, services to homeless and school climate/student

behavior. Two district indicators, dropout rate and graduation rate, continued to be tracked and reported. The activities associated with this goal were constrained during the year due to a continuing variety of administrative changes, staff reorganization and mission clarification for various district offices.

**Strengths:** A reduction in the number ATOD events [e.g., CO7 (Prohibited Controlled Substances), DO5 (Alcohol Possession and Use), D12 (Inhalants), D13 (Drug Paraphernalia), and S006 (Tobacco)] was attained at both the middle school and high school levels. There were 129 events report for the high schools (including the Alternative School) during FY06 and 86 events reported in FY07, a positive change of 33%. In the middle school, there were 30 events reported in FY06 and 28 events in FY07, a decrease of 7%. In the combined middle school-high school analysis, a reduction of 45 ATOD events, from 159 (FY06) to 114 (FY07), a 28% reduction was attained.

District Conduct Report indicators continued to send mixed signals that warrant closer monitoring. The School crimes category went from 302 to 317 events, a 5% increase. The DDOE offenses category decreased from 2775 to 2338, 15.7%. Taken together, the combined categories showed a 13.7% decrease.

According to the Delaware Department of Education all schools in the Christina School District had fewer than 5 unsafe incidents for every 100 students for three consecutive fiscal years. Therefore there were no Persistently Dangerous Schools during FY06. A statewide analysis of this indicator for FY07 is pending receipt from the DDOE and will be reported subsequently.

The percentages of students earning C or higher in Health courses during FY07 were higher than the FY06 outcome. Substantial numbers of students are meeting local standards as measured by course marks. In grades 7-12, more than 7 of every 10 students continued to earn satisfactory course marks in health education.

Christina Schools identified 484 homeless children in grades pre-kindergarten through 12. All were reported receiving one or more services by the Homeless Advocate; in addition 4 pre-kindergarten and 88 adults also were served. The most commonly provided services were: Free lunch/breakfast (100%), transportation (90%) and school supplies (85%); tutoring, remedial assistance and counseling ranged from 30% to 45%.

**Areas that require Strengthening:** The attainment of expanded services related to health and wellness could not be determined for the 2006-2007 school year. Multiple changes in district and departmental organization, staffing and day to day challenges resulted in formidable obstacles that prevented establishing the components for addressing this objective. There was no evidence of a systematic data system or any periodic reports that provided documentation. Employment of a Health Specialist to provide consulting services for implementation of the coordinated school health model also was deferred. In addition, there was no evidence available that the middle schools were provided with an integrated health curriculum. The district's curriculum, *The Great Body Shop*, remained in place during FY07 for the elementary schools.

There was little or no change in the distributions of suspensions and arrests between FY06 and FY07. However, the number of both indicators was substantially higher during FY07. Suspensions were relatively low in the elementary and intermediate schools but continued to rise sharply in the middle schools and high schools.

Student perception of school safety in grades 5, 8 and 11 was less positive than their peers throughout Delaware. This was especially so in grade 11. All grades reported violence as a problem in their school more frequently than the statewide average. All grades reported obeying and respecting teachers at lower rates than the statewide average.

There was slippage in reducing the percentage of dropouts. In 2005-2006 (the latest available data), the rate was 9.3% (N = 5096). This was an increase of 1.6 percentage points from the 2004-2005 school year when the rate was 7.7% (N = 4945).

The local graduation rate for 2006, the most recent data available (within the context of all cases cleared), was 75.1% (N= 758). This was a slight decline from the previous year when 76.3% (N = 720) was reported; none of three high schools met or exceeded the state's intermediate graduation target of 79.5%.

Specifically, the district may wish to consider the following that go somewhat beyond the immediate data but are consistent with emerging practices:

- *CSD: Cultivating Students of Distinction* (Christina's Strategic Plan 2007-2010) entails the effective use of a Balanced Score Card to report information. Consequently a high priority should continue to be given to the refinement and implementation of the district's student data system. A system that links demographic information, program participation, services provided, district inputs, student outcomes, and costs is a potentially powerful tool for effective decision making, systematic program improvement and resource allocations. It has the potential for determining what is working while providing a rational basis for change.
- 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, 2005) will always 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. Doctoral studies (conducted by the office that produces the annual ATOD Reports) that examines the congruence between actual reportable events and student self-reports within the same years would be informative. If verification occurs, then services and procedures for addressing these needs could be applied more effectively.
- Careful monitoring of student indicators that are cited in the Student Conduct Report, both School Crimes and DDOE Offenses, appears warranted. Reduction in these specific events (codes) should enhance the safety and well being of employees and students and help sustain a wholesome learning environment. Consequently, strategies, programs, curricular emphasis, school security, student government and home-school citizen groups that focus on preventing these violations should be emphasized. Programs that reward appropriate behavior should be continued and expanded.

**C: Has the CSD Assisted Teachers to move to "Highly Qualified" Status? Substantial Progress. The District is progressing toward NCLB compliance.**

Nearly all elementary and intermediate schools attained 100% of their classes taught by HQTs. The combined rate of the middle and high schools was 97.2%. The special and alternative schools ranged from 55% to 89%. Overall, the district's Classes taught by Highly Qualified Teachers 2006-2007 was 96.7% and those staffed by qualified teachers, 3.3 % (*Profiles 2007*).

### **Additional Recommendations**

During times when austere budgetary limitations constrain provision of services, allocation of resources takes on greater urgency. Given the district's primary focus on student achievement, there are steps that may ensure that program evaluation promotes this main concern and assists the Christina School District in accomplishing its mission. Within this context the following recommendations for linking effective program evaluation and school improvement planning are suggested for consideration:

- Continue to refine, test and expand the district's internal student information system. It has powerful potential. Develop or refine user friendly school based reports that focus on PEP plans. Ensure that mandated data elements are consistently posted to the system by rewarding schools for accurately entering data elements in a timely fashion.

- Examine the district Annual Data Collection Plan at mid-year. Ensure that the data requirements are in place that will enable the evaluation of the approved Consolidated Grant. Concurrently, review the required data specification needed for producing information that directly addresses the intended evaluation. Review and revise the Application as needed to ensure that the required data will be available to evaluate each approved objective.
- Continue the practice of reporting the context for the annual evaluation. This will help to ensure that new reporting formats continue to be understood and used effectively. Context defines the relevant environment, desired and actual conditions, identifies unmet needs and unused opportunities, and diagnosis of problems. It gives meaning to the outcomes and provides an essential basis for developing objectives whose achievement results in programmatic improvement.

This report describes the impact of programs and services funded through the Consolidated Grant upon the Christina School District's improvement plan during the FY06 (2006-2007) school year. Like previous annual evaluations, it suggests what can be done to assist progress, achieve the district's mission and realize Christina's vision. Knowing the current status and the processes that bring about outcomes are critical components for making improvement and for meeting or exceeding state standards. The FY07 context and outcomes provides information that will make possible a united effort that will help the Christina School District move forward with steadily increasing effectiveness.