

Contract For Excellence 2007-08 School Year Jamestown City School District

Achievement Issues

Jamestown Public Schools is a C4E district because of our high school math circumstance. The 2003-04 accountability data show an economically disadvantaged participation rate of 87%. In 2004-05 that same rate improved to 91%. In 2005-06 our participation rate for economically disadvantaged students improved to 99% due to diligent efforts of district personnel. However, our high school's SRAP designation ramped up to "SRAP Year 2" status because of the academic performance of our thirty-three students with disabilities. We have, therefore, resolved the two-year participation problem that created the SRAP designation. We have experienced a single year with an academic performance problem with our SWD subgroup. However, because the New York State accountability system does not discriminate between participation and performance issues, our SRAP status (and, as a result, our C4E status) has suffered.

A broader look at our district's overall achievement circumstance brings attention to the following areas:

English Language Arts is a continuing concern. While our elementary schools continue to perform above the "all students" standard, economically disadvantaged students have flirted the AYP standard. At the middle school level, two of our three schools have made the "All Students" AYP mark but one school has not. Subgroup performance in ELA has been problematic with SWD's, Economically Disadvantaged, and Hispanic students struggling to achieve AYP.

Students with Disabilities have also underperformed in Mathematics at the middle school level though all our schools still hold the "In Good Standing" designation.

After our high school, the school building that has struggled with accountability status issues is Washington Middle School. It happens to be our middle school with the largest populations of economically disadvantaged, SWD, and LEP students.

Over the years, our district has also struggled with the challenges presented by our large transient population and an increasing impact of poverty. As an urban/city district, many of our instructional priorities have been focused on Students with Disabilities, economically disadvantaged, and Limited English Proficient students. We have welcomed the additional opportunities that our increased state aid has created and easily grouped our resultant improvement initiatives into the five categories framed by the Contract for Excellence.

Contract Plan

Our strategy for Jamestown has been to address the high school first. We have addressed these factors by providing additional academic intervention services and summer school. We are also providing a team of guidance counselors and support personnel to help students entering ninth grade. We have also added individual tutoring for our target populations throughout the school day. We will initiate a learning lab at our high school so needy students can access additional core content support. We have added one full-time ESL teacher at JHS to work specifically with this target population.

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District wide, we have initiated a Principals' Academy. We feel this professional development for our critical academic leaders will pay huge dividends for all target student populations. At the same time we are hiring a full-time mentoring coach to work with all new teachers in the district. This coaching service will emphasize best practices and will develop individual growth plans for our new teachers. We have also initiated a staff development program to provide ELA, Math and differentiated instruction workshops for our veteran teaching staff. We will also start a new program, "In Building Facilitators" that will tap our best teachers to provide after-school workshops within their building.

We have entered into an agreement with the New York State Small Cities Association's "Center for Improvement" to help us make a complete data analysis audit of our school system. We have reorganized our administrative staff and added a full-time coordinator of math to oversee our math department and to lead our student performance data analysis effort. In addition, we have created the position of Director of Middle Level Education. Like other middle schools in the state, our middle schools have lagged in achievement and stand to benefit greatly from his leadership and initiative. We also moved several of our principals in another re-organizational effort, which landed a different administrative team at our most needy middle school – Washington Middle School. We are also combining efforts with our local United Way agency to initiate formal mental health services for targeted students at our high school and middle schools. Also at our high school, we have added more slots for these same student groups to attend BOCES for occupational training. We feel this will inspire and motivate these students to the completion of high school.

We will provide after-school programs at two of our elementary schools - Ring and Rogers. We were subject to 21st Century grant cuts this past year. These programs will increase our students time-on-task by lengthening their school day and providing a valuable academic component immediately after school.

We will be funding several positions to reduce our class size in the elementary and middle school buildings serving our most needy student populations. In addition we are adding reading teachers in four elementary schools and one middle school to help improve our reading achievement and prevent future problems. This will complement our two established Reading First elementary schools.

We have also added 2 ESL teachers at Ring and Fletcher elementary schools as our LEP population has increased over the last several years. We have recently been awarded an ESL grant in conjunction with the State University of New York at Fredonia to further help these students.

We feel that Jamestown has targeted our most needy learners with this elaborate and comprehensive C4E plan. We have tried to enhance our existing programmatic initiatives with this C4E plan. Certainly our two-year effort to improve literacy and math instruction are enhanced and accelerated by this plan.