

Class Size Reduction:

The Elmira City School District is committed to maintaining favorable class sizes in its elementary schools and 7th grade academy. The district will continue to support staffing in the 2015-2016 School Year using C4E dollars. This reduction in class size will support the district's aggressive plan to remedy its deficiencies in teaching students with disabilities at the elementary level as well as support the district's literacy model as it implements the Common Core State Standards. Providing favorable class sizes allows instructional staff to facilitate teaching and learning in a meaningful and engaging way, fosters positive relationships in the classroom and provides opportunities for individualized instruction to support all students.

The implementation of small class sizes will improve student academic achievement through support for the following research-based best practices:

- Direct, implicit instruction across all core curriculum areas
- Support for implementation of 90-minute literacy blocks in all kindergarten classes
- Teacher time for implementing research-based, prescriptive intervention for struggling students
- Additional teacher time for differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all students
- Additional time for implementing needs-based flexible grouping

In order to achieve these goals, the district reviewed projected class sizes in common branch classrooms in grades kindergarten through grade seven as well as student achievement data for all of the district's eight elementary schools, and 7th grade academy. As a result of the analysis, the district developed a plan that will use C4E funds to reduce class sizes across all nine elementary schools. In addition to projected class size, the district reviewed the following performance indicators consistent with the District's Comprehensive Education Plan:

- 4th Grade New York State achievement in English Language Arts and Mathematics
- NWEA results
- New York State Early Literacy profile
- Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment results
- Percent of students qualifying for free or reduced lunches

The Elmira City School District Early Grade Class Size Reduction Plan will not reduce the teaching staff at the upper grades to increase the staffing in the elementary grades.

District Initiatives:

The district is committed to serving its hardest-to-reach students. To this end, it has developed three focus areas in the elementary and middle level to providing student support and enrichment programming:

- Counselors at the Intermediate Schools (grades 3-6)
- Data Curriculum Coordinators focused on ELA skills in grade 7 – 12
- Data Curriculum Coordinator focused on C.C. math implementation grades 7 - 12
- Support the need for Aides in all of District PreK classrooms.

Intermediate Level School Counselors and Social Workers:

Intermediate school years set the tone for developing the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary for children to become healthy, competent and confident learners in the middle school. Through a comprehensive developmental intermediate school counseling program, counselors will work as a team with the school staff, parents and the community to create a caring climate and atmosphere. The counselors will address the developmental issues common to students at this age group and assist them with strategies to develop as maturing adolescents. By providing education, prevention, early identification and intervention, school counselors can help all children achieve academic success. The professional intermediate school counselor will hold a master's degree and required certification in school counseling.

The School Counselors will follow the American School Counselor Association Guidelines by providing:

School Guidance Curriculum

1. Academic support, including organizational, study and test-taking skills
2. Goal setting and decision-making
3. Career awareness, exploration and planning
4. Education on understanding self and others
Peer relationships, coping strategies and effective social skills
5. Communication, problem-solving and conflict resolution
6. Substance abuse education
7. Multicultural/diversity awareness

Individual Student Planning

1. Academic planning
2. Goal setting/decision-making
3. Education on understanding of self, including strengths and weaknesses
4. Transition plans

Responsive Services

1. Individual and small-group counseling
2. Individual/family/school crisis intervention
3. Conflict resolution
4. Consultation/collaboration
5. Referrals

System Support

1. Professional development
2. Consultation, collaboration and teaming
3. Program management and operation

Behavioral Specialist at Elmira High School:

Elmira High School has a significant number of behavioral referrals, a low graduation rate, and a high mobility rate for the past two years. Providing a safe, consistent and student-centered learning environment at Elmira High School is a top priority for the district. To this end, the district has created the position of Behavior Intervention Specialist.

Students with emotional and behavioral disorders present a great challenge. These students often lack the basic academic, behavioral, and social skills needed to be successful within and outside of school. The purpose of the Behavioral Intervention Specialist Program is to address this need by training educational personnel to directly address the behavioral needs of students.

The Behavior Intervention Specialist will implement a high quality, comprehensive and individualized intervention program to assist children with appropriate behavior within the regular school day. The Behavior Intervention Specialist utilizes community resources and local professionals to develop a strong quality program for the whole school and each student in need.

Specifically, the Behavior Intervention Specialist will:

- Use clinical insights, educational and motivational techniques and commitment to excellence to promote individual student growth in the classroom and the community
- Develop a safe and successful positive behavior individual and school-wide plan designed to reduce the number of disruptive behaviors of each client in the classroom and the community
- Provide solution-focused counseling, crisis intervention and management to students throughout the school day as needed
- Develop and implement effective behavioral management techniques consistent with goals and behavior plans
- Provide ongoing family contact and quality support services linking child and family with well-researched, relevant and affordable community resources and services
- Participate actively in all team meetings, staff meetings, case conferences, treatment reviews, individual and group supervision meetings and school meetings as requested and collaborate proactively with treatment team to deliver quality services
- Develop relationships and ongoing communication with teachers and other staff; provide concrete strategies for positive and feasible individual and class intervention strategies that are in line with client treatment and goals

- Train staff to implement individual and school-wide behavior plans
- Monitor and modify the behavior management system, as needed
- Be able to set appropriate limits
- Participate in ongoing training on intervention techniques
- Maintain all appropriate records including incident reports, and behavioral tracking forms and other documents consistent with goals and objectives

Increase in Teaching Aids at Intermediate Buildings

During the 2012-2013 school year the Elmira City School District transitioned to a progressive partnering between elementary schools model. This model created four elementary schools to have students in PreK and four intermediate schools to house students in grades three through six. This transition also relocated the sixth grade back into the intermediate schools from the District middle schools. Our data indicated that the sixth graders were responsible for a direct increase in student management concerns in each of the intermediate buildings. The data also reflected that these incidents occurred mostly in the minimally supervised, large attendance areas such as cafeterias, playgrounds and hallways. In an effort to address these needs we have developed a plan to increase student supervision in these areas. Our plan includes the following:

- Providing four Teaching Aide at each of the intermediate buildings for a total of 16 new teaching aide positions
- Relocating 12 PreK teaching aides from our PreK buildings to our three through sixth buildings
- Realign teacher supervision duties to include duties in these areas.

Needs of the District

Fiscal constraints continue to be an overarching need and challenge in the district. As stated earlier, due to state cut-backs, the district has experienced major staff lay-offs resulting in significant staffing changes three of the past four years. In addition to staff cut-backs, teachers have been reassigned to buildings. To realign programming and function in a fiscally responsible manner the district has begun a restructuring of building grade-levels. In 2012-2013 the K-6 buildings were rearranged into Pre-K thru 2, and 3 thru 6 buildings. For 2014-2015, the secondary buildings underwent similar transformations. Ernie Davis Middle School closed in the summer of 2014 and the remaining buildings are reconfigured to house secondary students. At this time it has been determined that Southside High School will house students in grades 10 – 12 and serve as Elmira's lone High School. Seventh grade is now Broadway Academy. Grades 8 and 9 are now at Ernie Davis Academy.

During the Focus Review in the spring of 2014, the following needs were identified:
The District needs to:

- Develop a multi-year strategic plan that is driven by educational priorities to meet individual school needs and identified achievement gaps.

- Provide for effective monitoring of the evaluation process to insure quality instructional and administrative practice to meet the needs of students.
- Have a mission and vision statement with clear goals outlining district priorities and a strategic plan for actualizing this mission.
- Have a professional development plan that is sufficient to meet the rigorous expectations of CCLS.
- Develop systems and structures for the collection and use of data across the district along with clear district expectations and consistent protocols for the use of data to promote student achievement.
- Establish district-led administrative meetings that focus on instructional leadership requiring specific targeted agendas. Meetings to focus on data-driven inquiry process, professional learning needed to implement the CCLS and the Instructional Shifts.
- Create a culture of high expectations for students among staff that is reflected in classroom instructional practices that are rigorous and student centered.
- Cultivate partnerships to provide support for the school's comprehensive vision for students' social emotional development health through outreach to local organizations, employers, and the school community.
- Develop a comprehensive family and parent engagement plan that articulates creating a welcoming environment and outlines how parents can partner with the school to support student success.

Strategies

- The Board of Education has developed a strategic plan that will guide the work of the district. The plan was put into place in during the last academic year with the establishment of Strategic Planning Action teams and Strategic Planning Implementation Teams.
- Establish district-led administrative meetings that focus on instructional leadership requiring specific targeted agendas. Meetings to focus on data-driven inquiry process, professional learning needed to implement the CCLS and the Instructional Shifts.
- To execute the intensive reforms required by the DTSDE it will be essential for the District to create professional development system that supports administrators and teachers. Professional development opportunities will need to be based on data, provide multiple points of entry for teachers and administrators and ultimately results in high levels of student engagement and achievement.
- The timelines for the implementation of additional activities and particular tenets are delineated in the plan.

Professional Development of Administrators

The Superintendent and district administrators meet twice monthly with the Focus School principals. One meeting per month is dedicated to secondary principals and centers on issues pertaining to the implementation of the SCEP plans. The second monthly meeting is for all district administrators focusing on professional development for administrators. Professional development topics for 15-16 were identified through the recommendations of the Focus Review teams, district student data, APPR data and requests from administrators. Communication with Focus principals occurs in meetings, email and visits to their schools.

Highlights and Funding

The highlights of the initiatives described included in the ECSD C4E are the adoption of the NYS Common Core modules, establishing PLC teams, identifying what common core instruction looks like in the classroom, strategic planning, enhanced parent engagement and data driven inquiry. The implementation of these activities will be sustained through professional development throughout the year. The district will work to ensure there is an equitable distribution of resources between the four focus schools.