PreK-5 Literacy Comprehensive Plan and Recommendations

February 27, 2014

PreK-5 Literacy

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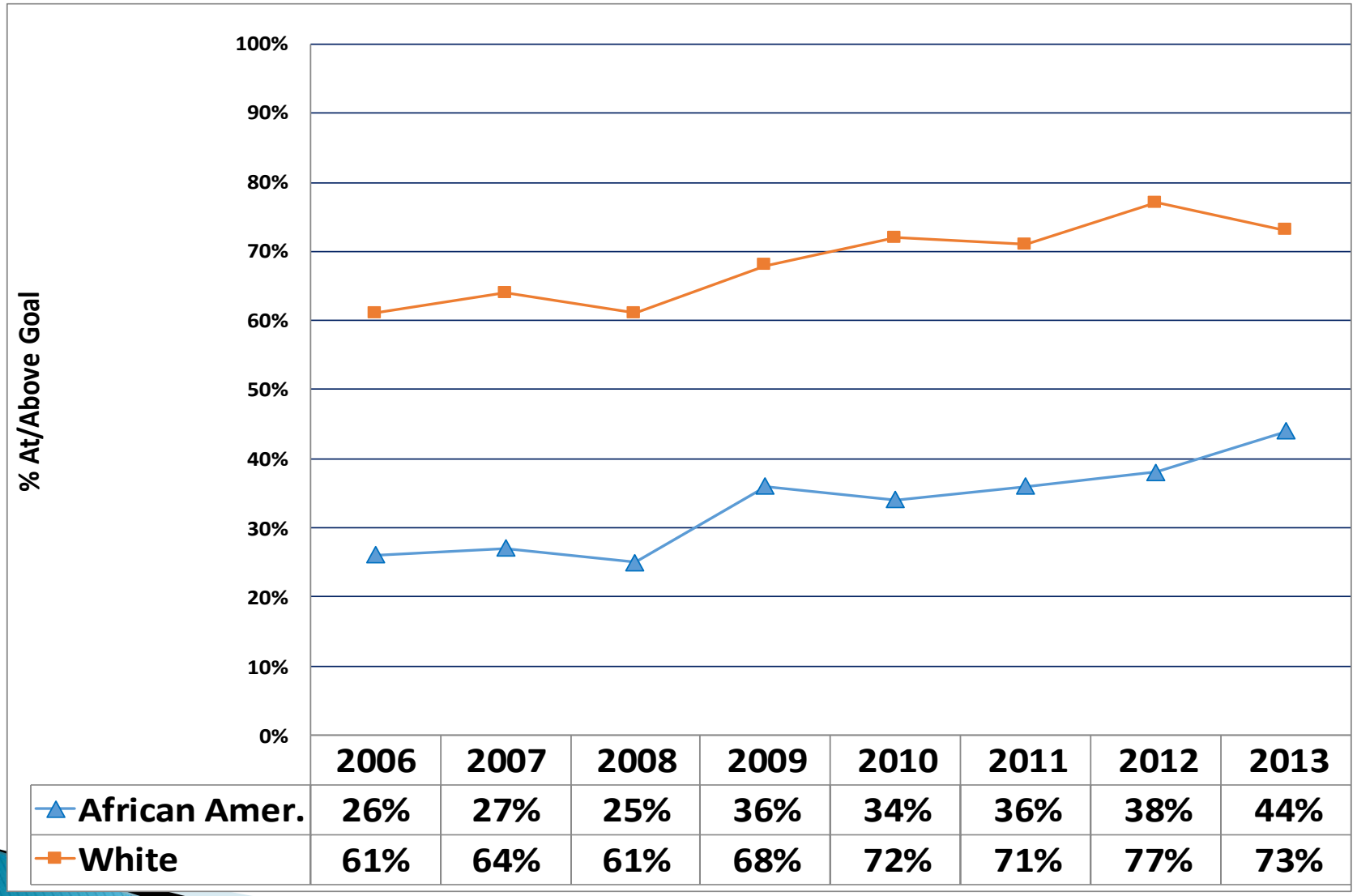
K-5 Literacy: Student Performance Today

Over the past 3 years, Norwalk students CMT Reading reflects increases in grades 4 & 5, but with no change for Grade 3

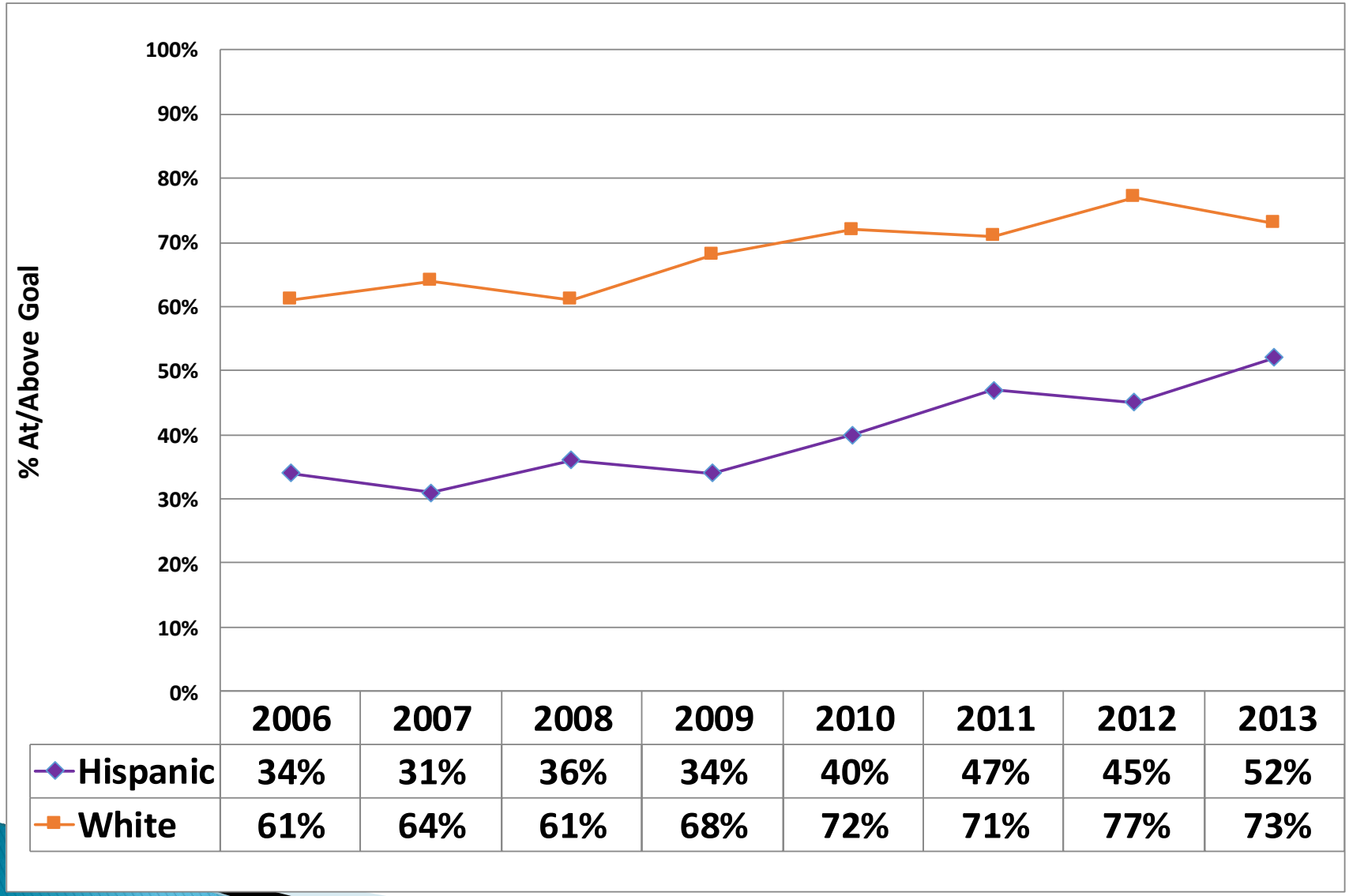
- Grade 3: 51.4% at Goal (decline in 11 or 12 schools)
- Grade 4: 60.9% at Goal
- Grade 5: 63.6% at Goal

CMT Grade 4 Reading - Goal Trends



	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
African Amer.	26%	27%	25%	36%	34%	36%	38%	44%
White	61%	64%	61%	68%	72%	71%	77%	73%

CMT Grade 4 Reading – Goal Trends



	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Hispanic	34%	31%	36%	34%	40%	47%	45%	52%
White	61%	64%	61%	68%	72%	71%	77%	73%

PreK-5 Literacy: Where are We Today?

Curriculum

- Schools are transitioning to CSS and planning for implementation, but are at varied stages
- Some schools are using outdated materials
- Teachers are pulling from a variety of resources
- Many schools have foundation skills programs in place… but not all

Instruction

- Some schools (10 of 12) are implementing instructional practices through "Literacy How," with a limited "train the trainer" model
- Some schools are using "Reader's Workshop" and "Writer's Workshop" (models vary and are inconsistently defined and implemented)
- Across the district, we are using "tiered intervention" (SRBI) inconsistently

PreK-5 Literacy: Where are We Today?

Assessment

- Ten schools are using mCLASS in grades K-3
- The DRA for K-5 is being phased out (administration can be subjective)
- Some schools are creating common formative assessments within grade levels
- All schools in grades 3-5 are using "Mentoring Minds"
- All schools will participate in SBAC field tests

K-5 Literacy: Where are We Today?

Professional Development

Curriculum

- PD is limited and varies by building

Instruction

- Introduction to CSS varies by building
- All schools have had some level of training in "data driven decision making" (varies from school to school)
- All schools received introductory training on SRBI (Scientific Research Based Interventions)
- Twenty teachers (2 from 10 schools) are currently receiving training in "Foundations of Literacy"
- Some schools have had training in different models of Reader's & Writer's workshop
- Some schools have had training in strategies for ELL students
- There has been limited specialized training in serving students with special needs
- Limited "common training" for regular ed, Special E and ELL teachers

Assessment

- Ten schools have received training in mCLASS by 'Literacy How'

The Future: All Students College and Career Ready

Connecticut State Standards

- High School – Students can demonstrate college and career readiness in English language arts and literacy.
- Gr 3-8 – Students can demonstrate progress toward college and career readiness in English language arts and literacy.

1. Students can read closely and analytically to comprehend a range of increasingly complex literary and informational texts.
2. Students can produce effective and well-grounded writing for a range of purposes and audiences.
3. Students can employ effective speaking and listening skills for a range of purposes and audiences.
4. Students can engage in research/inquiry to investigate topics, and to analyze, integrate, and present information.

K-5 Literacy: Going Forward in Norwalk

We have gone "on record" with our goal to close the Achievement Gap by 2020.

- We must lead and advance an unprecedented district and community-wide effort to assure that ALL of our students, by the end of grade 3, are reading at or above grade-level standards.
- It will take all of us, working together, fulfilling our respective responsibilities, and doing whatever it takes!
- There must be a culture of "no excuses." All of our students and staff can and will achieve and meet high expectations.

K-5 Literacy: Going Forward

Improving Literacy
is NOT
About Selecting
"ONE Reading Program!"

PreK-5 Literacy: Our Future

Norwalk's 10 Point Literacy Strategy

1. Define a clearly articulated vision, beliefs and approach to literacy
2. Establish clear expectations about student engagement, building positive student-teacher relationships and creating a school and classroom culture for learning
3. Implement an explicit professional development plan for our teachers, teacher assistants/paraprofessionals, school leaders, and others
4. Develop more effective district & school structures and systems to provide guidance, proper monitoring and a "roadmap" that assures effective implementation
5. Generate an unprecedented level of parent support and engagement

K-5 Literacy: Going Forward

Norwalk's 10 Point Literacy Strategy (cont.)

6. Engage Norwalk's Public Libraries and community partners
7. Create "assessments" that are common to all schools and grade levels
8. Increase student access to quality after-school, Saturday and summer programs
9. Make available the most appropriate literacy resources and materials that meet Norwalk's student, staff and parent needs
10. Develop opportunities for innovation, learning and sharing success and best practices

1. Adopt a new *Literacy Policy* for NPS

Vision

- All students will become confident, independent readers, writers, speakers and listeners by helping them navigate content-rich, engaging literacy texts and literary nonfiction that build content knowledge.
- All students will express logical, evidence-based opinions, both orally and in writing, that reflect deep understanding of the texts and the essential concepts they seek to convey.
- All students will become fully literate, independent, lifelong learners, honing research skills that will ensure that they know how to locate, analyze, synthesize and share information with others.
- Parents, teachers, school leaders and community will work together towards the larger goals of assuring that all students are meeting grade-level standards, as we prepare our students for post secondary success and responsible citizenship in a dynamic, global society.

1. Adopt a new *Literacy Policy* for NPS

Beliefs for Grades K-5

- All of our students can and will meet the highest of expectations.
- All of our schools and classrooms will create a culture for learning.
- It is our collective responsibility to nurture and advance the growth, knowledge and skills of our students.
- Literacy must be integrated into all content areas throughout the school day.
- A comprehensive and coordinated literacy program will help build foundational and content knowledge.
- A comprehensive program of professional development is essential to truly preparing our teachers and leaders, and assuring sustainability.
- Parents are integral to creating a "24/7" learning environment.
- We can realign all of our human and capital resources to more effectively drive our comprehensive literacy initiative.

New Expectations: Students

1. Meet or exceed grade level expectations
2. Master foundational skills for reading
3. Master greater knowledge of content and vocabulary necessary to navigate more complex texts
4. Become Critical Thinkers and Problem Solvers:
   - Clearly articulate essential problems, questions or issues
   - Examine and understand multiple points of view
   - Recognize key concepts and big ideas
   - Elaborate on concepts with sufficient detail
   - Make deeper, relevant inferences
   - Understand implications and consequences
5. Master multiple writing formats for a variety of purposes and audiences
6. Demonstrate competence with technology

Expectations: Teachers

1. Effectively engage all students, develop positive student-teacher relationships, and create a classroom culture of high expectations for all
2. Develop deep understanding of CSS and the instructional shifts
3. Master curriculum and other curriculum resource components
4. Know how to effectively implement “tiered instruction and intervention”
5. Be familiar with best practices in implementing literacy (foundational skills, building vocabulary and knowledge, etc.), including service to ELLs
6. Integrate reading, writing and technology in all content areas
7. Analyze and use assessment data
8. Develop effective parent engaging strategies
9. Leverage and use technology

Expectations: School Leaders

1. Create a school culture of high expectations for all, effective classroom climate and positive relationships across all stakeholders
2. Understand CSS and instructional shifts
3. Guide core curriculum and other curriculum components
4. Be able to effectively implement a tiered Intervention system
5. Track best practices in literacy instruction for all learners
6. Analyze student data to guide changes in practice
7. Effectively monitor instruction & provide quality feedback via classroom walkthrough protocols, observations, & implementation of teacher evaluation system, etc.
8. Build functional and effective school teams and systems

2. Plan and Deliver High Quality and Focused Professional Development for All

Who:

A. Leadership
   - District Literacy Team
   - Principals and Curriculum & Instruction Site Directors
   - Team leaders
   - Spring and Summer Institute

B. School Teams
   - Summer Training Institute
   - Fall and Winter "Progress Sharing"

C. All K-5 Teachers
   - Summer training
   - PD (2-4 hours per month TBD)

D. Individual Teachers
   - Coaching and In-class support

E. Teacher Assistants and/or Paraprofessionals
   - PD (1.5 to 3 hours per month)

2. Plan and Deliver High Quality and Focused Professional Development for All

School Culture and Climate

- Creating a culture of high expectations.., a new "growth mindset";
- Engaging students, building teacher-student relationships and creating a more effective school and classroom climate

Curriculum

- Comprehensive knowledge of core curriculum and other essential curriculum resources
- Resources and materials appropriate for tiered interventions

Instruction

- Foundational skills
- Vocabulary (academic & content), knowledge development and comprehension strategies
- Depth of knowledge higher order thinking /questioning
- CSS literacy modules (provided by CSDE)
- Integrating writing
- Integrating Technology as an instructional tool
- Effective strategies for ELLs
- Effective implementation of tiered intervention strategies

Assessment

- Additional training in mCLASS
- Training in SBAC Interim and Summative assessments
- Training in SBAC Digital Library
- Training in Data analysis and decision making

2. Plan and Deliver High Quality and Focused Professional Development for All

When and How:

- **Year 1**: Provide a minimum of **90 minutes of professional development** for a minimum of **2 days per month**;
- **Annual Professional Development Days to become "Best Practice" Conference Days**: Teachers, School Teams, and Principals display and share best practices in a conference setting.., demonstrations, etc.
- Provide **PD plan for all K-5 schools** (*Literacy How* supported by Grossman Foundation and other foundation/grant funding)
  - Foundational Skills – Year 1
- Provide **coaching and modeling** (*Literacy How* supported by Grossman Foundation & other foundation/grant funding)
- Contract with other service providers to provide training and development in other essential areas (ELL, SpEd, School and Classroom Climate, etc.)
- Establish annual PD calendar incorporating all 'non-negotiable' training and development.
- Refocus and realign state grants and foundation funds on all of the above.

3. Focus and Establish new District and School Structures, Roles and Systems to Advance Our K-5 Literacy Initiative

Related Recommendations:

A. **District Data Team**: Focus on "essential school quality standards", goal and target setting and monitoring progress.

B. **District Literacy Team (new)**: Focus on Literacy Plan implementation including professional development, use of time and resources, fidelity of implementation, assessment, interventions, ELL and Sped.

C. **PreK-5 Literacy Role (new)**: To provide focused leadership on K-5 Literacy objectives.

D. **Curriculum and Instructional Site Director (new)**: CCSS implementation, literacy plan implementation, monitoring, coaching and teacher evaluations

E. **School Based Professional Learning Communities**: Focus the work of School Data Teams & Grade Level Teams on data analysis, literacy, and professional development. Clarify expectations and operating standards to assure consistency and "fidelity" with implementation.

4. Engage and Support Parents at an Unprecedented Level

Norwalk recognizes the critical importance of supporting early stages of child development and the essential role that parents can play.

- Our approach must be comprehensive and address child development from birth to grade 3, a critical window for language and knowledge development.
- Parents can assume an even greater role in enhancing their child's cognitive and language development when they know how, and have access to resources and support to help guide them.

Closing the achievement gap by 2020 will require an unprecedented level of parent engagement and a culture change in many of our schools.

4. Engage and Support Parents at an Unprecedented Level

Recommendations:

1. Identify and target 1-2 Title I schools (as "pilots") where the school community embraces a new vision for parent engagement and support (evaluate and develop a roll-out plan for other schools)
2. Establish a school based 'hub' for parents, a "Parent Café," where parents are always welcome and have access to resources, guidance, and the opportunity to socialize, learn and work with other parents and staff
3. Develop a "curriculum" and/or "parent guidebook" that describes and provides concrete examples and suggestions, by developmental stages, about what parents can do to enhance their child/children's language and cognitive development
4. Produce materials and resource "packs" to provide to parents on a monthly basis to support their child's learning at home
5. Provide parent workshops

5. Engage Public Libraries and Community Partners

- Enhance and expand connections between Norwalk's public libraries and all of our elementary schools, with ideas to include:
  - Increasing class visits
  - Expanding outreach of summer reading program
  - Promoting library card availability to NPS families
    - Plan "library card drives" at schools for parents and children
    - Include in school registration, Kindergarten packages, etc.
  - Exploring potential for interlibrary book loans to make Public Library books available through school libraries
- Work with community programs and partners to identify and expand outreach to families
  - E.g., explore expansion of Raising Readers Parents Club program to additional schools (currently in Brookside and Tracey)
  - Book distribution programs

6. Implement Benchmark Assessments that are Common to All Schools and Grade Levels

2014-15

- Grades K-5: mCLASS (September, January and May)

- Grades 3-5: SBAC Interim Benchmark Assessments (two times per year beginning this Fall) and an annual Summative Assessment (beginning in 2015)

<u>Other assessments for diagnostic purposes and progress monitoring</u>

- Benchmark assessments in new core reading curriculum

7. Provide for Greater Access to After School, Saturday and Summer Programs

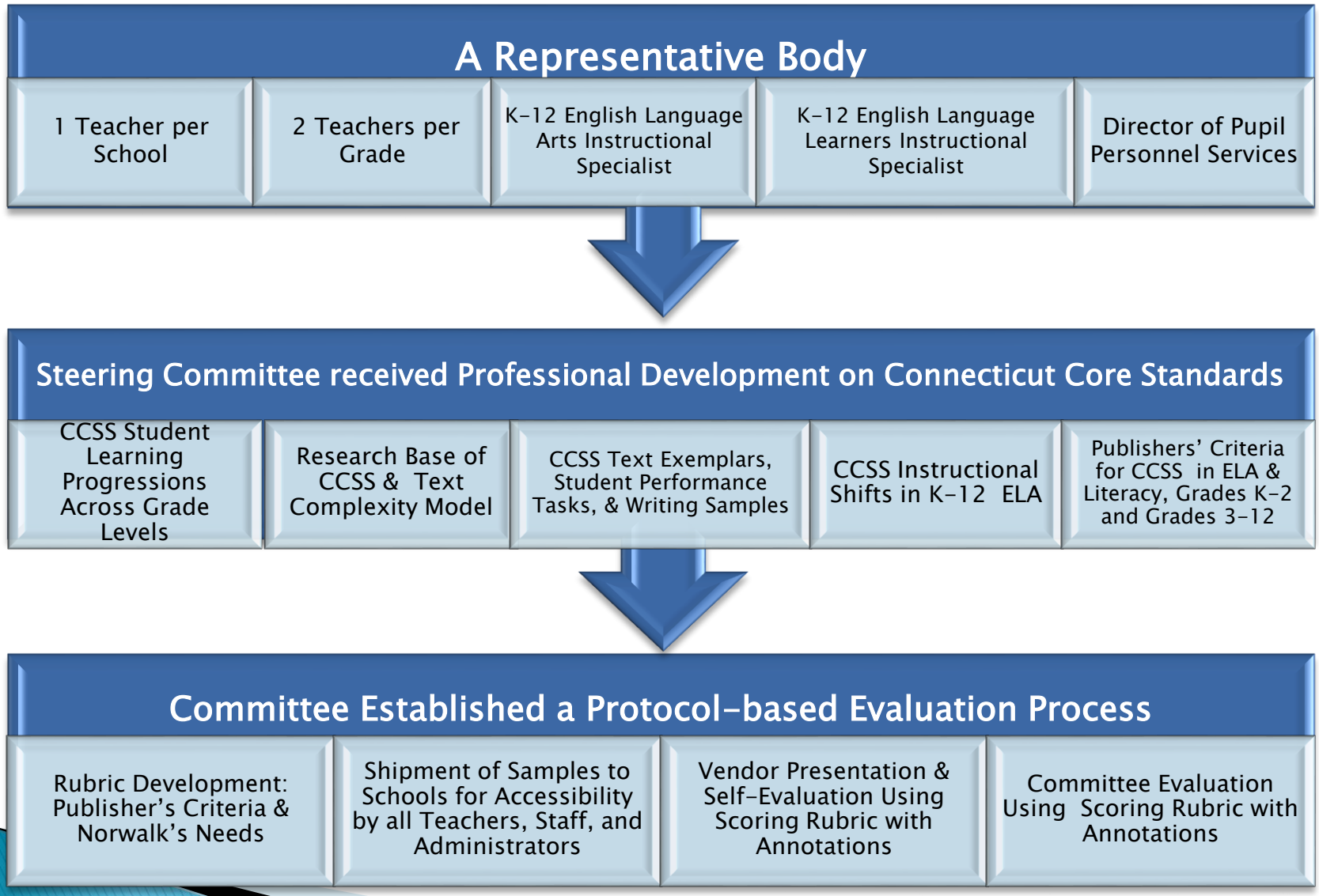
Recommendations:

1. Expand after-school programs for Title I eligible students (from Title I schools)
   - Establish one hour after school programs in targeted schools (TBD) that meet NPS quality standards

2. Expand 2014 K-3 Summer Program to include an additional 150 to 200 students, in lieu of limiting to lower 25%

3. Establish 1-2 new "satellite" after-school and Saturday centers (churches or community centers) in home neighborhoods to provide easier access for families
   - South Norwalk
   - Second area TBD

2012-2103 K-5 ELA Steering Committee



2012-2013 K-5 ELA Steering Committee

Top 3 Recommendations

Vendor and Resource	Rubric Points Earned (48 points max)	Rubric Percentage Calculation
Pearson Reading Street	47 Points	98%
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) Journeys	46 Points	96%
McGraw-Hill Reading Wonders	41 Points	85%

8. 2013-2014 Continuation of Selection Process

September thru January:

- Input from additional staff from schools, including teachers and principals
- Engaged services of individuals with expertise in literacy, supported by foundation funding exclusively for this purpose
- Engaged an outside evaluator to examine the data, reports and evaluations submitted by the five different vendors/publishers
- Researched information regarding the implementation of each of the programs directly with current "users/clients" of the different programs
- Met again with each of the publishers/vendors for Q&A and to receive updates.

8. 2013-2014 Continuation of Selection Process

Independent Evaluator Findings:

"Very difficult to derive compelling conclusions about effectiveness from the data provided..."

- Inadequate research design
- Data not related to effectiveness
- Failure to consider context, external factors, etc., that could have had an impact on findings

8. 2013-2014 Continuation of Selection Process

The analysis also underscored the importance of programs that:

- Have strong evidence of conceptual grounding in literacy research
- Demonstrated alignment between core curriculum and CCS;
- High fidelity of implementation (implement the model as it is designed)

However, based on available evidence, two of the programs appeared to have greater promise:

- Journeys (HMH)
- Core Knowledge

8.1 Adopt HMH's *Journeys* as a Comprehensive Common Core-aligned Resource

- Provides explicit sequence for developing and reaching foundational skills and language standard targeted in CCS
- Uses high quality literary selections through a balance of fiction and non-fiction text
- Builds students' knowledge using texts from science, social studies, the arts and humanities
- Focuses on close reading of texts
- Text-dependent questions that guide students in citing text evidence
- Strong spelling component
- Utilizes research-based strategies for differentiated instruction from experts in ELL and SpEd
- Integrates instruction in all ELA strands of Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening and Research
- Enhanced digital resources

8.1 Adopt HMH's *Journeys* as a Comprehensive Common Core-aligned Resource

Additional "Advantages"

- Flexible Implementation of Resources: Teacher's materials in HMH Journeys are formatted to accommodate 2 different instructional models--a readers' and/or writers' workshop setting and a traditional classroom structure with flexible grouping of students.

- The cost of HMH allows us to redistribute use of our existing capital to address the need to build abundant independent reading libraries in every classroom to enhance our literacy program goals.

8.1 Adopt HMH's *Journeys* as a Comprehensive Common Core-aligned Resource

Common Core-aligned Reading Materials

- Big Books (K-1)
- Decodable Readers (K-2)
- Leveled Readers (K-5)
- Readers for Core Instruction (K-5)
- Adventure Unit Magazines (3-5)
- Classroom Libraries (1-5)

24/7 Web Access from Anywhere with Internet Service

<u>For Students:</u>

- E-textbook
- Digital Fiction & Nonfiction library
- Interactive Learning Activities
- Game-based Learning
- Individually Assigned Activities

8.1 Adopt HMH's *Journeys* as a Comprehensive Common Core-aligned Resource

For Teachers

- E-textbook
- Interactive Lesson Planners
- Online Assessments and Data
- Smartboard-enabled Lessons
- Professional Development Library

Common Core-aligned Assessment System

- Beginning-of-Year Benchmark
- Middle-of Year Benchmark
- End-of-Year Benchmark
- Formative & Summative Tests
- Progress Monitoring Assessments
- Unit Assessments

8.2 Integrate Scholastic's *Core Knowledge Classroom Libraries* to create a literacy rich environment

- Integrates a wide array of additional independent reading materials
- Supports a range of reading levels for differentiated instruction
- Provides a balance of authentic fiction and nonfiction
- Develops students' vocabulary across content areas
- Builds grade level knowledge across a broad range of topics from history, geography, math, science, language arts, visual arts, and music

8.3 Integrate additional independent reading materials via approved publishers: Scholastic, Booksource, Classroom Library and Random House

Provide each school with the opportunity to select reading materials ($1,000 per classroom) that meet NPS standards and foster vocabulary and knowledge development:

- Supports a range of reading levels for differentiated instruction
- Provides a balance of authentic fiction and nonfiction
- Develops students' vocabulary across content areas
- Builds grade level knowledge across a broad range of topics from history, geography, math, science, language arts, visual arts, and music

9. Provide for Opportunities for Innovation and Growth

NPS will have consistency and standards across all schools.

- Guided by a shared vision, beliefs, standards and guidelines
- Common CSS
- "Non-negotiable" professional development for all staff
  - Reading foundations
  - Developing content knowledge and vocabulary
  - Best instructional practices
- Student engagement and classroom climate
- Common assessments
- Common requirements and systems for tiered instruction and intervention
- Common expectations across all content areas
- All resource materials must meet criteria for selection

9. Provide for Opportunities for Innovation and Growth

We will also seek to create a culture of continuous improvement, and to that end, we must "practice what we preach" by supporting innovation and establishing ways to learn from each other.

We will have consistency across the district with standards that all schools must meet, while we must also recognize that not all schools are "cookie cutter" with regard to their programs and curriculum.

Some schools may have themes and/or may be at a level of preparedness that may warrant a different literacy program that meets NPS standards.

9.1 Provide for Opportunities for Innovation and Growth

I am recommending that we establish a 'proposal' process for schools that seek to pilot other programs with unique and/or innovative underpinnings.

I recommend that we also adopt Core Knowledge (K-2) and Expeditionary Learning. CKLA offers:

- Strong Reading Foundations Skill Strand
- Systematically builds knowledge with rich content
- Easily transitioned to *Journeys* or *Expeditionary Learning* at grade 3

The proposal would be required to demonstrate that the program is consistent with our literacy policy or established NPS Literacy standards.

Summary of Recommendations

1. Adopt a ***Literacy Policy***
2. Plan and deliver high quality Professional Development
3. Focus and establish District structures, roles and systems around literacy
4. Engage and support parents at an unprecedented level
5. Engage Norwalk's Public Libraries and community partners
6. Common "Assessments" in all schools
7. More access to after-school and summer school programs

Summary of Recommendations

Citywide:

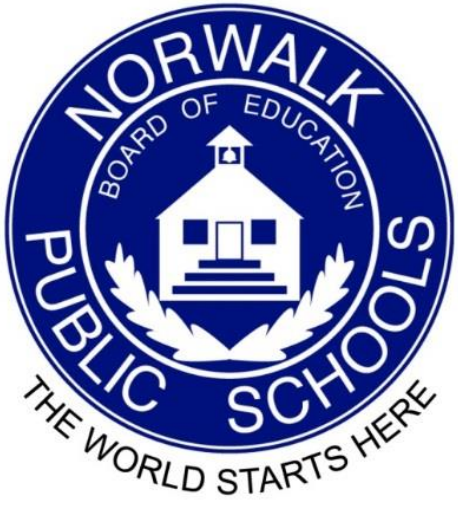
8.1 Adopt ***Journeys-HMH*** for NPS K-5 Literacy Program

8.2 Adopt **Scholastic's** *Core Knowledge Classroom Libraries*

8.3 Adopt Independent reading material aligned with CSS available from Scholastic, Booksource, Classroom Library and Random House.

Pilot Schools:

8.4 Adopt **CKLA and Expeditionary Learning**


NORWALK
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THE WORLD STARTS HERE