

CAMDEN
2007 Curriculum Audit and
Professional Development Review

By: Willa Spicer
Executive Director
NJ Performance Assessment
Alliance

Curriculum Audit Report

Camden School District

February 20 – February 23, 2007

PART 1.

INTRODUCTION

Team Members:

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Audit of District Curriculum Materials and Professional Development Contracts

February 20 and February 21, 2007 by Deborah Conway and John Clifford

School Visitations and Dates:

Riletta Cream	Pk-8	Feb. 22 & Feb. 23
Whittier	ES	Feb. 22
Yorkship	ES	Feb. 22
Davis	ES	Feb. 22
Wilson	ES	Feb. 23
Parkside	ES	Feb. 22
Lanning Square	ES	Feb. 23
Wiggins	ES	Feb. 22 & Feb. 23
Camden	HS	Feb. 23 & Feb. 23
Creative Arts	HS	Feb. 23
Pyne Poynt	6-8	Feb. 23

Focus and Questions:

The focus of this report is to document evidence pertaining to the following overarching questions:

1. Is there a Board approved curriculum that is aligned to NJQSAC elements in existence for all of the subject content areas?
2. To what degree is the District's curriculum being implemented in the classrooms?
3. Is the academic program supported by staff development?
4. What staff development has the district had since September 2005 and what has it cost?

Curriculum Audit Report Process Used in all School Districts

The charge for this project was to document the evidence in support of the above overarching questions and not to evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction and / or curriculum resources. To achieve the aim, 57 retired superintendents, staff developers, principals and supervisors as well as university personnel were selected to visit the districts and record evidence available to an observer.

At the beginning of the process, two members of the district team examined the written curriculum in each content area required by the state and listed the materials outlined in the district documents. They noted the presence or absence of the following important curricular elements

- The curriculum is clear about what is taught to children.
- There are references of the NJCCCS to the curriculum.
- The curriculum includes grade-level benchmarks and / or interim assessments.
- The curriculum contains a pacing chart / scope and sequence.
- The curriculum contains references to technology.
- The curriculum identifies instructional resources.

The information from the written curriculum review was given to school visitors who used it in their visits to the classrooms in selected schools. (The schools in each district were selected by the process developed by the director of the QSAC research) The classroom observations served as evidence of the extent to which the written curriculum was being implemented. The observers looked for evidence that the teachers used the district curriculum to make decisions about what to teach. They noted teachers' expectations as expressed in their objectives, observed student work as displayed in the rooms and hallways and recorded what was happening in the classroom during the five minutes they were in the class. For this latter observation they used the protocols set forth in the book, The Three-minute Classroom Walk-through by Carolyn Downey, Betty Steffy, Fenwick English, Larry Frase and William Poston, JR.

The District's professional development contracts and staff surveys serve as evidence that staff development supports the instructional program and serves the needs of the system. While all staff development was examined, only contracts near or above \$100,000 are reported individually.

Finally, a short survey of teachers in each of the schools was distributed to the teachers and collected anonymously. The results give some sense of whether the staff values the district's staff development efforts and whether they report that they use the information in their practice.

All data collected for this project are called an Appendix and included in a file held in the Department of Education office. In addition to the completed forms, sample forms that were used in the whole project are also included in this appendix.

CAMDEN SCHOOL DISTRICT
Camden, NJ

OVERVIEW

Camden's curriculum is old and incomplete. Some of the content areas were written before there were standards in the state and some use earlier versions of the standards. The only updated and current curriculum used is in the content area of Mathematics

Upon review of school verification forms, it is noted throughout this report that there is no consistency in the use of materials or strategies used in classrooms within a school or from school to school. Most classrooms consisted of teacher directed instruction, which is teacher to whole class, with pencil and paper tasks for students to do. There was some evidence of active learning with students engaged in discussions, projects, etc. especially in the elementary schools. Classrooms in these schools were often well equipped, including classroom libraries, calculators and even Smart Boards. The high school observations showed little activity anywhere except in a few advanced classrooms.

While objectives were written on the board, in many classes the objectives listed what was being taught, rather than what was to be learned. A textbook program for language arts was in use rather than a balanced literacy program which is the requirement for Abbott school districts.

Camden's record of staff development activities is confused. The one new contract for math staff development is reflected in classrooms and in the staff development surveys. The positive response in some schools to staff development efforts show that some teachers appreciate the work that has gone on this year and have benefited from the training. Unfortunately, only 17% of the high school staff answered the survey.

There are great needs in Camden. The district would benefit from current curriculum, training in effective instructional strategies, and multiple ways to assess learning. Students deserve to become active learners who can interact with rich material that is motivating to them.

Is there a written curriculum that meets the requirements of QSAC?

The Camden School District consists of preschool through grade 12. Results of a curriculum audit at the district level reveal inconsistent curriculum and the absence of references to the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards. At elementary levels, no Language Arts textbook is identified for use and no assessments are indicated. Reading lists are provided with a resource information packet. The approval date on the curriculum documents for language arts at elementary grade levels is 2001. Outdated NJCCCS are referenced. In Math, the *Harcourt Math Series* is listed for kindergarten through grade 6 with related software and annotated web pages. The date of approval on math curriculum for elementary grades is 2004. In Science, *Big Books* by Silver Burdett and Ginn (1994) are listed. Approval date for curriculum is 1995. The Science guide referenced outdated standards.

The district presented Language Arts Curriculum Management Guides for Bilingual education in grades 1 and 2, and for ESL in grades 1, 2, and 4. The information in these 2006-07 documents reflected current standards, identified textbooks and defined learner goals. Specific references for use of technology were minimal. Only the ESL curriculum guides indicated assessments and included substantial supplemental material from the WIDA Consortium.

At grade 5, in social studies a textbook was referenced but not identified. Appendices include pre/post quarterly tests. The social studies curriculum was dated 1998. In world languages, curriculum dated 1989 was reviewed; a foreign languages proficiency-oriented curriculum guide was provided which listed competencies at four sequential levels. The health curriculum was dated 1997-98 and is not referenced to standards. The program, *Focus on You* is listed with some interdisciplinary references. Quarterly topic tests are provided.

Language Arts curriculum at grades 6-8 bears the date of 200-01. At grades 7 and 8, *Elements of Literature, Adventures for Readers, and Writers Choice* are the texts listed. Grade 6 curriculum references standards, includes assessments and rubrics, and benchmarks. Grades 7 and 8 curriculum refers to outdated standards and contains only diagnostic tests. No reference to the use of technology was found. In math, the graphing calculator and whiteboard are listed. There are pacing/scope and sequence charts which are referenced to the NJCCCS. The math curriculum contains assessments, benchmarks, and technology listings. Science curriculum predates the development of State Standards. Interdisciplinary notations and lessons are available, as are assessments, and benchmarks in the form of quarterly tests. There are websites for grade 8 only. In social studies, physical education and health, there is no documentation or reference to standards as the documents pre-date the standards.

At the high school level, there are curriculum documents for English dated 2000, containing scope and sequence charts, overviews and sample plans, all referencing some standards but not current ones. There are assessments, quarterly topic tests, and a list of materials. The curriculum for Algebra I and Geometry are dated March 13, 2006; Algebra is dated July 6, 2006. Different concepts are taught to different sections of students. The scope and sequence charts outline the standards for objectives for math and connect them to activities and projects. The Geometry guide contains resources and standards for consumer and life skills, writing, and technology. Curriculum documents are available for Biology (2006); Earth Science could not be located. Overview, model lesson plans, and scope and sequence charts reference current standards and contain assessments, benchmarks, pacing charts and technology integration. Social studies document contains components that show reference to an old version of the standards. Art curriculum (1990) and Health/Physical Ed curriculum (1993-1995) are old documents that pre-date standards.

To what degree is the district's curriculum being implemented in the classroom?

A. Wilson School

Wilson Elementary School houses children in preschool through grade four. Literacy materials were in use by staff and students. Objectives listing what was to be taught were written on the chalkboard; students learned skills-based lessons. The *Harcourt Trophies* program (for literature) was used for instruction. Plan books were current and referenced standards. Assessment included performance tasks, observation and dialogue, and informal checks. Centers and computers were in use by children; teachers meet once weekly at grade level meetings. The *Harcourt Series* is also used for Math and Science. Classrooms had word walls, math centers, libraries, reading centers, and computers.

B. Parkside School

Parkside Elementary School houses children in kindergarten through grade five. A literacy block of 90 minutes is scheduled. Lesson plans were available but contained no reference to NJCCCS; however, kindergarten teachers used an old curriculum guide. Children read in the *Harcourt Trophies* program; student work was displayed in classrooms. Assessments were oral and written responses, and working portfolios were used. Various levels of Bloom's Taxonomy were observed from knowledge through application. The *Measuring Up* materials were used in grades 3 and 4 in preparation for State assessments. All subject areas are included in grade 5 where students also use computers, Microsoft Word, and EXCEL. *Harcourt Horizons*, a textbook, is used for social studies; lesson plans are available. Students were conducting a science experiment on matter. A block of 90 minutes is also scheduled for Math instruction. Students use calculators, are instructed in small groups, and chart their progress in portfolios.

C. Yorkship School

Yorkship School houses preschool through grade five. Children and teachers used the *Harcourt Series* for language arts and math, and Big Books for science. Objectives were reviewed and stated what was to be taught that day. Most instruction was identified at the knowledge, comprehension, and application levels of learning. Standards were listed in plan books; no

observation of technology use was noted. Review of questions for the NJASK occurred. Teacher-directed lessons were common with a variety of performance tasks and projects by children. Textbooks and chapters are referenced in plans.

D. Davis School

Davis School houses preschool through grade 6. The *Harcourt* Series serves as the basis for program/curriculum. Other materials are available for use by staff and students. Activities are provided for involvement by children; their work is displayed. While all subjects are provided at fifth grade, learning is from a textbook. Teachers stand in front of a class. Students are in a heterogeneous class in grade 6. Binders and NJ Teacher Desk Reference are available to staff for GEPA and ASK preparation in language arts. Objectives that state what is to be learned are written on the board in language arts and math. Inclusion classes are included at Davis. Student graphs are viewed. A Writers Wall displays language arts learning in the form of book reports and worksheets. Levels of instruction include recall, comprehension, application, and synthesis.

E. Learning Square – Two Buildings

Learning Square houses children in preschool through grade 2 and grades 3 to 6. Evidence of the 100 Book Challenge is noted at Learning Square. Rooms are decorated with charts and other appropriate learning aids. Math manipulatives are used by the children. The NJCCCS are referenced in plan books. In primary classrooms, centers are arranged and used by the children. Large and small group instruction is evident. Students wear uniforms which are blue pants and blue shirts. *Measuring Up* workbooks for math and writing journals are used to prepare for the NJASK. A selection of literacy materials is available to fifth and sixth graders as are manipulatives for understanding math. Student work reflected the use of 100 Book Challenge classroom libraries, journals, and projects. In special education classes, the same materials are found and used by students. All students receive experiences in art.

F. Wiggins School

Wiggins School houses preschool through grade six. Objectives stating what was to be taught were written on the board; *Harcourt* programs were used for instruction; student work was displayed; and a focus on literacy and math was prevalent. Primary classrooms contained centers and math games for children to use. In science, discussions occurred around desert animals. Assessments used were quizzes, open-ended questions, and writing. In math, Study Island and Compass Learning, two technology programs, were in use. Instruction was noted at the knowledge and comprehension levels. In grades 4 – 6, some materials were outdated (social studies posters); however, curriculum guides and lesson plans were readily available and instruction closely followed the plans. Technology programs were purchased for the school and were in use. During the visit, students were involved in the play "Black Wax Museum" where students acted out roles of black Americans. The visitors commented, "Very nice!"

Every team of teachers has a Resource teacher, except kindergarten. Most teams have only three to six special education students with IEPs. This is an inclusion school. There was one self contained special needs class learning about math. Students partake in all subject areas.

G. Cream School

Cream School houses preschool through grade 8. In classrooms, there was one classroom objective stating what was to be taught in either math or language arts on the board. The *Harcourt* materials, workbooks, and pencils, paper and crayons were used for instruction. The curriculum guides were available with references to standards. Classes were heterogeneously grouped for instruction. At grade 6, the Unified Mathematics Curriculum (revised in 2005) was used. Students were reviewing sample NJASK questions. A World History lesson with students completing a worksheet of recent news items required students to write the facts of each item. Science was being taught without a curriculum to follow. Pre-Algebra was taught in seventh grade; Algebra was the eighth grade program. In Algebra class, calculators and a SMART board were used. Art and music were also offered.

H. Pyne Poynt School

Pyne Poynt School houses grades 4 through 8. In Language Arts, there are either curriculum guides with references to NJCCCS, or the America's Choice program, or the Language Arts/Literacy Unified Curriculum for grade 8 available and in use. Objectives are on the board and students are expected to write in notebooks where rubrics are included. Students read trade books in a guided reading activity and participated in Reader Response end of unit test. Student work, especially writing, is displayed in the classrooms and in the hallway. A variety of math programs and materials were in use. The Unified Math Curriculum (2004-05) following the Paul Lawrence Series was the base instructional program. Students studied the Greek City States and Life in the Colonies in social studies. For the most part, assessment is a pencil and paper task or test. Curriculum guides used were dated 1998, 1999, in science, the Arts and Art. The technology curriculum was completed in 2006 and references the NJCCCS.

I. Creative Arts High School

The Creative Arts High School offers a range of courses in English, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Students are in either general, college or advanced placement courses. Although much of the curriculum document is old, objectives are written on the board, and some materials reflect the HSPA content and skills. Kaplan materials (2006) are used. Students do have the opportunity to study pre-calculus, physics, and take SAT Prep. Calculators are used. Content and level of teaching reflect the level of the course, with higher level thinking in more advanced classes. Courses in art, music, health and physical education are provided.

J. Camden High School

Curriculum is seriously lacking in most classrooms. In some cases there were objectives and plans; in some cases none existed. While Algebra I and II are offered, classes share textbooks and use worksheets. *Elements of Literature* seems to be the basic anthology for English. All teachers use their version of information and hand-outs for instruction and assignments. Some technology was present but not in use.

CAMDEN SCHOOL DISTRICT

Camden, NJ

Is there a written curriculum aligned to the NJQSAC elements in all subjects?

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School Level Implementation of Curriculum

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J. Camden High School

Curriculum is seriously lacking in most classrooms. In some cases there were objectives and plans; in some cases none existed. While Algebra I and II are offered, classes share textbooks and use worksheets. *Elements of Literature* seems to be the basic anthology for English. All teachers use their version of information and hand-outs for instruction and assignments. Classes are teacher-centered; in most, students answer questions, do workbook pages, copy notes etc. Some technology was present but not in use.

Professional Development Findings: Camden

Camden administrators submitted fragmented and partial documentation reporting five professional development activities in the period September 2005 to December 2006, at a total cost of about \$256,000 (a precise total could not be calculated because some contracts included multiple services, and the amount dedicated to professional development was not specified). One of the contracts involved costs in excess of \$100,000: \$207,750 to LL Teach, Inc. for professional development for math teachers and coaches in grades 6-8.

Teacher Professional Development Survey results (see Appendix) indicate that:

- respondents tend to believe that they receive high-quality professional development that relates to improving student performance (QSAC C1b), but differ in this regard from school to school (ranging from 2.62 to 4.14 on a scale of 1 to 5);
- respondents are equivocal about whether their district or school provides follow-up training, such as coaching or classroom visitations, after professional development activities (QSAC C2), but differ in this regard from school to school (ranging from 2.03 to 3.82 on a scale of 1 to 5);
- 67.7% of respondents report that their district or school sought their input about quality or results of professional development at least once in the past two years (QSAC C1h), but differ in this regard from school to school (range = 47.4% to 90.3%);
- 79.7% of respondents report that their district or school provided professional development about how to improve achievement of student subgroups at least once in the past two years (QSAC C3b), but differ in this regard from school to school (range = 66.7% to 90.0%); and
- 82.0% of respondents report that they have modified their classroom practice as a result of recent professional development activity, but differ in this regard from school to school (range = 53.6% to 100%). However, only 47.4 percent of respondents provided a meaningful example of such modification, as requested.

Wide variations in survey responses from school to school suggest that the district may need to conduct its own periodic professional development surveys, including items about follow-up training and outcomes, and devote efforts to ensure that teachers in all schools have equal access to high quality professional development as defined by QSAC.

Teacher Professional Development Survey Results: Camden

1. My district or school provides me with high-quality professional development activities that relate to my needs in relation to improving student performance. [1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree]

<u>School</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>Avg.</u>	<u>Responses</u>
Camden H.S.	7	4	11	7	0	2.62	29
Creative Arts H.S.	0	1	4	3	4	3.83	12
Davis	2	1	3	7	15	4.14	28
Lanning Square	1	1	3	7	7	3.95	19
Parkside	1	1	9	3	5	3.53	19
Pyne Poynt	0	7	7	7	3	3.25	24
Riletta Cream	2	6	15	16	7	3.43	46
Whittier E.S.	School failed to return surveys						
Wiggins	1	3	5	12	11	3.91	32
Wilson E.S.	School failed to return surveys						
Yorkship	School failed to return surveys						
Total	14	24	57	62	52	3.54	209

2. After professional development activities, my district or school provides follow-up training, such as coaching or classroom visitations. [1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree]

<u>School</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>Avg.</u>	<u>Responses</u>
Camden H.S.	13	7	5	3	1	2.03	29
Creative Arts H.S.	0	5	2	4	1	3.08	12
Davis	4	1	3	8	12	3.82	28
Lanning Square	2	3	5	7	2	3.21	19
Parkside	2	2	9	3	3	3.16	19
Pyne Poynt	2	7	8	4	3	2.96	24
Riletta Cream	4	18	10	9	3	2.75	44
Whittier E.S.	School failed to return surveys						
Wiggins	1	4	6	14	7	3.69	32
Wilson E.S.	School failed to return surveys						
Yorkship	School failed to return surveys						
Total	28	47	48	52	32	3.06	207

3. In the past two years, my district or school has sought my input about the quality or the results of the professional development I have received.

<u>School</u>	<u>% Yes</u>
Camden H.S.	59.3
Creative Arts H.S.	66.7
Davis	84.0
Lanning Square	73.7
Parkside	47.4
Pyne Poynt	50.0
Riletta Cream	63.6
Whittier E.S.	Failed to return surveys
Wiggins	90.3
Wilson E.S.	Failed to return surveys
Yorkship	Failed to return surveys
Total	67.7

4. In the past two years, my district or school has provided professional development about how to improve achievement of student subgroups.

<u>School</u>	<u>% Yes</u>
Camden H.S.	66.7
Creative Arts H.S.	90.0
Davis	76.9
Lanning Square	88.9
Parkside	84.2
Pyne Poynt	78.3
Riletta Cream	75.0
Whittier E.S.	Failed to return surveys
Wiggins	90.0
Wilson E.S.	Failed to return surveys
Yorkship	Failed to return surveys
Total	79.7

5. I have modified my classroom practice as a direct or indirect result of professional development activity in the period September 2005 to December 2006. If yes, describe how your practice has changed.

<u>School</u>	<u>% Yes</u>	<u>% Providing Example</u>
Camden H.S.	53.6	24.1
Creative Arts H.S.	100.0	75.0
Davis	92.3	46.4
Lanning Square	88.9	47.4
Parkside	83.3	63.2
Pyne Poynt	79.2	58.3
Riletta Cream	87.8	50.0
Whittier E.S.	Failed to return surveys	
Wiggins	84.4	37.5
Wilson E.S.	Failed to return surveys	
Yorkship	Failed to return surveys	
Total	82.0	47.4

Response Rate

<u>School</u>	<u>% Faculty Responding</u>
Camden H.S.	17.1%
Creative Arts H.S.	31.6%
Davis	42.4%
Lanning Square	33.3%
Parkside	61.5%
Pyne Poynt	37.5%
Riletta Cream	75.4%
Whittier E.S.	Failed to return surveys
Wiggins	61.5%
Wilson E.S.	Failed to return surveys
Yorkship	Failed to return surveys
Total	30.3%