



Supporting Successful Strategies to Achieve Improved Results

The S³TAIR Project Clearinghouse of Effective Practices in Special Education

Literacy

Area of Nomination: Literacy

School: Charter School of Educational Excellence

Website: www.charterschoolofeducationalexcellence.org

Region: Hudson

Grade Level: Elementary

The Charter School of Educational Excellence (CSEE) is managed by Victory Schools, a school management and advisory service and holds the mission to produce students who meet or exceed all New York State learning standards. CSEE creates a challenging learning environment with high expectations for every child with an emphasis on the basic subject areas of English Language Arts, mathematics, social studies, and science. The fundamental belief at the Charter School of Educational Excellence is that all children can learn.

THE PRACTICE:

The Charter School of Educational Excellence built their model of literacy instruction based on elements of effective practice including frameworks developed by Fountas and Pinnell, Questions About Relationships (QAR) strategies, and universal data decision-making using the Victory School's proprietary and rigorous data driven decision-making approach to inform all key strategies that impact student achievement and behavior. This approach utilizes continuous and multiple forms of assessments and data at the school level, the classroom level and the student level to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for intervention.

WHY WAS THE PRACTICE INITIATED:

Charter School for Educational Excellence staff adopted their current literacy practice during the 2007-2008 school year to address the literacy needs of students whose assessment outcomes and classroom performance indicated their reading and math abilities were 1-3 years below grade level. Recognizing that some of their students were struggling and in an effort to meet the need of ALL students, they decided to review their practices and institute changes accordingly.

WHY THE PRACTICE WAS VALIDATED BY S³TAIR:

The Charter School of Educational Excellence practices a data collection and analysis model that taps into a myriad of sources identified to determine student and staff needs. In terms of student progress monitoring, for example, student work samples, benchmarking, and both teacher-made and standardized assessments are reviewed to make sense of the "big picture". Their sophisticated system of data driven decision-making is building-wide and the data are shared by administrators with grade level teams and literacy coaches/consultants at scheduled meetings. Professional learning opportunities are strategically planned and provided on an on-going basis to support the staff's capacity to understand the role that data plays in instructional planning. Progress monitoring data show improvements in academic process for students with disabilities. Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) data show that students made steady gains throughout the benchmark terms, some gaining as many as 30 percentile points between administrations. On the New York State Assessment in English Language Arts prior to practice implementation, 20.8% of grade 3 and 52.7% of grade 4 students achieved proficiency. By 2007-2008, 40.8% of students at grade 3 and 75% of students at grade 4 achieved proficiency, and by 2008-2009, **93.1%** of third grade students and **88%** of fourth grade students achieved proficiency.