

**New Hampshire Department of Education
Bureau of Special Education
Special Education Program Approval and Improvement Process**

**Laconia School District
Focused Monitoring Report
2008-2009**



*Following the Child
Every Child, Every Day, In Every Way*

The Focused Monitoring Summary Report

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II. Introduction

This section of the report should include an introduction to Focused Monitoring, the 5 Step Inquiry process, and a preview of why the report is being written.

✓ Overview of Focused Monitoring

- Focused Monitoring presented to Laconia School District as another means for us to strategize around how to improve our practices to support students in our classrooms. While this opportunity was given to us based on NECAP results for our students who are identified as educationally disabled, as a district formerly identified as being in need of improvement, we were interested in looking at improving support for all students.
- We understood that the purpose of Focused Monitoring is to improve the educational performance for all students with disabilities.

✓ Achievement Gap Data: NECAP results and brief background as to why the district was selected to participate in Focused Monitoring

- Our team reviewed the NECAP data with a focus on the disparity between students with educational disabilities and all other students. We were impressed by the difference between these two groups and quickly people began to make assumptions about why that difference exists – challenging students, high socio-economically disadvantaged population, special education teachers, intervention programs, regular education teachers, etc.
- NECAP 2006
 - Reading
 - 13.56% Proficient Students with Educational Disabilities
 - 73.35% Proficient All Students
 - Mathematics
 - 22.73% Proficient Students with Educational Disabilities
 - 67.13% Proficient All Students
- NECAP 2007
 - Reading
 - 27.74% Proficient Students with Educational Disabilities
 - 76.66% Proficient All Students
 - Mathematics
 - 24.68% Proficient Students with Educational Disabilities
 - 68.81% Proficient All Students
- We quickly realized that while we had worked hard toward making AYP and getting the designation of DINI removed, we needed to address the fact that three quarters of our students with disabilities are not achieving in the proficiency range.

✓ District Profile:

- Laconia School District is located in the lakes region of New Hampshire with access to Winnisquam, Opechee and Winnepesaukee Lakes. The Superintendent has grown up in our schools – starting as a Behavior Specialist, Crisis Counselor, Guidance Counselor, Assistant Principal, Principal, Assistant Superintendent and now, Superintendent. Superintendent Champlin has worked in the Laconia School District for over 25 years – the last eight as the Superintendent. Assistant Superintendent has worked in our district for over 14 years – the last four in her

current position. Our overall student population is 2325. Our community is a county seat for social services and recently we have seen a rise in our socio-economically disadvantaged population. This past year, our district average for free/reduced meals rose to 49% - one elementary school is over 58% and our high school is 39%.

- There are three elementary schools – ranging from 412 students to 326 students. Two of our elementary schools support pre-school through grade five students and one welcomes kindergarten through grade five students. These schools were completely remodeled with additional classrooms added between 5 – 7 years ago. Our Principals are fairly new – fifth year, fourth year and second year Principals.
- Our middle school sits within fifty feet of a Opeechee Lake. This school has a brand new building that is in the final phase of construction. There are 480 students in this sixth through eighth grade school. Our middle school has a Principal who is finishing his fourth year with us.
- Our high school is amongst the oldest high school buildings in the state of New Hampshire – its classic design has curbside appeal while its interior spaces offer challenges to twenty-first century learners. The regional technical-career center is attached to our high school and offers our students many options in their programs. Our high school has a Principal in his second year with us and has just completed their first year in a four-by-four block schedule. There are 775 students.
- SINI – Middle School, High School and Elm Street School
- DINI – 2006 to 2008. We were a DINI in the area of Reading for two years. We adopted a new elementary literacy program and jumped in to Response to Intervention process with strong interventions in our elementary schools.

✓ **District Mission and Beliefs**

- Supporting the potential success with every student, every day, in every way
 - Our mission statement was revised this past year with input by all stakeholders in our school community.
 - Our next step in this process is to develop our beliefs – our vision
 - We have a strategic plan that has the following categories
 - Curriculum, Assessment, Instruction
 - Technology
 - Professional Development
 - Community-Based Education
 - Public Relations
 - Facilities

✓ **Achievement Team Membership** Include the names, titles, and positions of team members, and the constituency each member represents.

- **District Office**
 - Robert Champlin, Superintendent
 - Terri Forsten, Assistant Superintendent
- **Elm Street School**
 - Eric Johnson – Principal
 - Lori Krueger – Special Education Coordinator
 - Gail Bourn – Reading Specialist
 - Loretta Caron – Title I Teacher
 - Tiffany Rarick – Special Education Teacher

- **Pleasant Street School**
 - Charles Dodson – Principal
 - Wendy Olson – Reading Specialist
 - LuAnn Mussari – Title I Teacher
 - Heidi Hofmann – Special Education Teacher
- **Woodland Heights School**
 - Lisa Green-Barber – Principal
 - Ryan Marsh – Assistant Principal
 - Sue Carignan – Special Education Teacher
 - Joanna Bergman – Classroom Teacher
 - Pam Swift – Title I Teacher
 - Paula Christopher – Reading Specialist
- **Laconia Middle School**
 - Jim McCollum – Principal
 - Jennifer Sottak – Special Education Coordinator
 - Shannon Siegler – Classroom Teacher (English-Language Arts)
 - Sarah Roberts – Classroom Teacher (Mathematics)
 - Peg Tetreault – Special Education Teacher
- **Laconia High School**
 - Steve Beals – Principal
 - Kathy McGuinness – Special Education Coordinator
 - Eric Greenfield – Special Education Teacher
 - Jackie Creed – School Counselor
 - Bob Konchak – Classroom Teacher
- ✓ **Essential Question(s)**
 - Why are our students with educational disabilities performing significantly below their peers on NECAP in Reading and Mathematics?
 - What are factors that influence results?
 - Do students who are dual impacted (educationally disabled and socio-economically disadvantaged) achieving lower than others?
 - What are the correlations between disabilities and proficiency results?
 - How much time are students with disabilities missing out on “tier 1” – regular classroom instruction?
 - Can related services and special support be provided to students within the regular classroom setting?
 - Does the size of our intervention groups impact student learning?

III. Get Ready for Inquiry

Are we ready?

What data do we need?

- Results of Focused Monitoring Readiness Survey
 - As we reviewed the results of our readiness survey, it once again confirmed the importance of having conversations about our work in an objective and systematic manner. Our ratings were mostly between two's and three's – sort of non-committal in some ways.
- Data Inventory
 - We have data! As many other school systems, Laconia School District has a lot of data. Our “kid grids” offer data that we gather annually on our students in the four areas of Follow the Child – academic, physical, personal and social. As a district that has been working with the Victoria Bernhardt team toward developing School Profiles, we have data in the area of demographics, perceptions, school process and student learning for each of our schools. We have elementary intervention grids so that depending on the assessment results that are recorded on the literacy assessment grid students are referred to a specific program for support. Performance Tracker with NWEA, and NECAP offers a lot of information.
 - We have data – we love data. How can we use the data we gather on our students to better inform instructional practices in the classroom and in special supports (Title I, ESOL, Special Education).
- Inventory of Initiatives
 - Elementary Schools
 - Began RTI three years ago
 - Focused on Reading, with a little support to Math or Writing
 - Student Achievement Teams
 - Meet every two weeks
 - Assess student progress (DIBELS, IRI, informal)
 - 3 Tiered Approach
 - Resources move from level to level
 - Decisions based on Data
 - Seen as a special education initiative
 - First 30-60 minutes of instruction is Tier 1 for all
 - Time is challenging – when to offer intervention
 - Menu of interventions
 - Middle School
 - Literacy Integration and RTI have been going on for three years
 - Social Studies offers leveled reading books at a variety of levels
 - Teachers meet once a week to plan for literacy instruction
 - All teachers are literacy teachers providing a Literacy Integration Class
 - Tier 1 is taught by Math, Science and Social Studies Teachers
 - Tier 2 Language Arts Teachers
 - Tier 3 are Special Education Teachers
 - There has been a reduction in special education referrals

- Special Education Teachers are co-teaching with Regular Education Teachers
- RTI has an attendance and behavior component at Middle School
- Teacher teams meet everyday – 80 students per team
- Academic Performance
 - 28 students failed two or more subjects first term
 - 11- 6th grade students failed
 - 8 - 7th grade students failed
 - 7 - 8th grade students failed
- High School
 - Read 180 is part of our English curriculum – number of students participating in read 180 has increased, increased teacher referral to this program
 - Freshman Academy – about 5 years old, has changed several times
 - Common planning has been challenging
 - Student Advisory meets one day/week, 20 minutes (first year)
 - 12-14 students in a group
 - Connections to students/staff
 - PLATO – offers continued opportunity for student engagement
 - Adult Education – evenings
 - Laconia Academy - evenings
 - Correspondence Courses
 - Honor Roll has had an increase this quarter
 - Offered cumulative opportunity
 - No study time
 - Block Schedule is new this year
 - Ratio of student to teacher is very strong
 - Teacher has less courses, less students
 - Increased School Counselor position
 - Increased Special Education Teacher
 - Competency documents
 - Fairly complete
 - Need to become part of our culture
 - Assessments – Authentic
 - Attendance Coordinator supporting students - RTI

IV. Organize and Analyze Data

What is our student achievement and what is the achievement gap?

What patterns and trends did we investigate?

What areas did the achievement team select for the focus of their efforts?

- Understanding district data
 - As a district identified as being in need of improvement, we had spent time with the root cause analysis process and formed two conclusions.
 - Classroom instruction needed to be stronger to support all learners. We looked to provide professional development in the area of differentiated instruction and in the area of literacy instructional practices. As we made a commitment to Response to Intervention, we also created an expectation that teachers support all learners in the classroom setting with direct instruction to meet their needs.
 - The second conclusion focused on the connection between assessment and interventions. We created a process for assessing students' skills, primarily in the elementary school years, and then looked at which interventions would support which learning needs.
- Identification of contributing factors to the achievement gap
 - Perceptions of staff about learners
 - Programs to meet the needs of learners
- Formation of subcommittees – through this process, we created one new subcommittee in our school district. Several committees are connected to the work being led by our Focused Monitoring Team. These committees meet monthly; there are several members who are on multiple committees and are able to support our work and focus for improving learning for our students.
 - Focused Monitoring Leadership Team
 - Terri Forsten, Assistant Superintendent
 - Jennifer Sottak, Special Education Coordinator
 - Lori Krueger, Special Education Coordinator
 - Ryan Marsh, Special Education Coordinator/Assistant Principal
 - Kathy McGuinness, Special Education Coordinator
 - Bernhardt Leadership Team
 - Charles Dodson, Principal
 - Lisa Green-Barber, Principal
 - Jennifer Sottak, Special Education Coordinator
 - Eric Johnson, Principal
 - Jim McCollum, Principal
 - Chris Ennis, Assistant Principal
 - Ryan Marsh, Special Education Coordinator/Assistant Principal
 - Steve Beals, Principal
 - Terri Forsten, Assistant Superintendent
 - LuAnn Mussari, Title I Teacher Leader
 - Karen Switzer, Technology Integration Facilitator
 - Karen Goss, Primary Teacher
 - Carmelle Gagne, Primary Classroom Teacher
 - Lori Krueger, Special Education Coordinator
 - Rebecca Sims, Middle School Teacher

- Humanities Council

- **Purpose of Humanities Council**

- ✓ Create a vision toward perfect Humanities Program
- ✓ Promote common experiences across the schools, grades and classrooms
- ✓ Share strategies for interdisciplinary teaching
- ✓ Focus on Humanities
- ✓ Establish standards and expectations for performance
- ✓ Differentiate practices – offer resources at multi-levels
- ✓ Honor direct instruction time for all students
- ✓ Build communication across K – 12 with links to curriculum
- ✓ Integrate with other Fine Arts Studies
- ✓ **Members of the Humanities Council**

- **Elementary School Representatives**

- Eric Johnson
 - Gail Bourn
 - Jennifer Doherty
 - Joanna Bergman
 - Linda Thanas
 - Lisa Green-Barber
 - Lori Krueger
 - Mandi O’Riordan
 - Wendy Olson

- **Middle School Representatives**

- Catharine Mallinson
 - Jim McCollum
 - Shannon Siegler

- **High School Representatives**

- Ramsay Eliason
 - Rick Crockford
 - Steve Beals
 - Eileen Young

- Mathematics/Science Council

- **Purpose of Math Council**

- ✓ Advocate for the importance of time for teaching mathematics and for using “prime time” for mathematics teaching and testing when possible
- ✓ Support teachers of mathematics at each level
- ✓ Greater coordination K-12, Improve communication from level to level.
- ✓ Verification of the preparedness from grade level to grade level.
- ✓ Establish assessment grid to ensure adequate measurement of performance at different grade levels.
- ✓ Mid-year, end of year assessments - elementary
- ✓ Establish clear curriculum implementation expectations
- ✓ Provide Professional Development to improve instruction and enable teachers to meet expectations
- ✓ **Members of the Mathematics/Science Council**

- **Elementary Schools**
- Ann Peterson
- Charles Dodson
- Pat Chase
- Ryan Marsh
- Sonya Roberts
- Stephanie Gibson
- Kate Shumway-Pitt
- Brian Bolduc
- **Laconia Middle School**
- Bob Clay
- Chris Ennis
- Jane Connelly
- Ginny Bean
- **Laconia High School**
- Scott Davis
- Ellen St, James
- Gary Liptak
- Ivy Leavitt-Carlson

V. Investigate Factors Impacting Student Achievement

How do our practices affect student achievement and the achievement gap?

What did we learn from perceptual data collected from students, parents, and staff?

What did we learn from all other data reviewed?

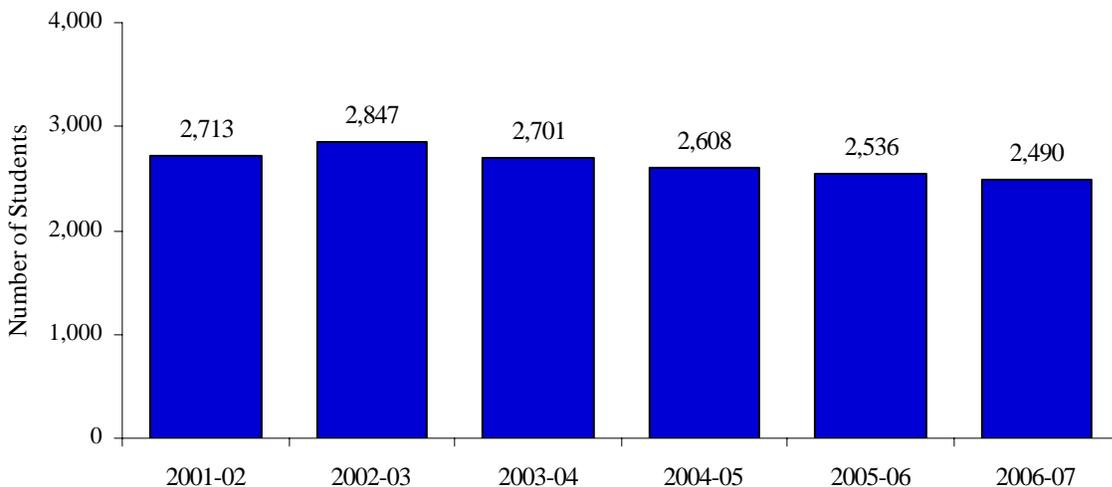
In this section of the report the team should provide a summary of analysis, disaggregation and summary of data as appropriate and indicate trends or patterns that answer the essential question. Description of the results and recommendations of all data collection activities should be included. Examples might be

DEMOGRAPHICS

Laconia School District is located in the heart of the lakes region in New Hampshire. According to the 2006 census, the city in which Laconia School District is located had a population of approximately 17,060 (<http://www.census.gov>). According to data gathered by the Census 2000, the median age of Laconia is 38.8 years. Laconia has approximately 6,724 households, with an average income of \$37,796 per year. The unemployment rate in 2000 was 37.2 %. The major stable employers in Laconia are Lakes Region General Healthcare, School District and NH Ball Bearings, Inc.

Laconia School District currently serves 2,325 students in 5 schools: 3 elementary, 1 middle, and 1 senior high. Five years ago, 2,713 students were served by the district. This 388 student decrease in overall district enrollment during the last five years is similar to what other school districts in our region and our state have experienced.

**Laconia School District Student Enrollment
2001-02 to 2006-07**



Conclusions/Patterns Trends Identified Through IEP Review Process

- **How has this process informed future plans for improving the writing of student IEPs?**
 1. The process has generated good ideas for creating benchmarks
 2. Include general educators in future professional development offerings related to the development of IEPs.

3. Use data from Performance Tracker to target students' areas of need in goal setting
 4. The team will assess targeted growth by reviewing those interventions put in place to support the IEPs.
 5. Improve how teams write the Present Level of Performance and connect this to annual measurable goals and benchmarks and include evaluation data.
 6. Utilize NECAP to inform decisions about IEP goals, benchmarks and accommodations.
 7. Prepare checklist of criteria for well-developed, well-written IEPs.
- **Describe how individual student performance information is conveyed from grade to grade/school to school:**
 1. Transition meetings are held as students move from 5th to 6th grade
 2. The district's Kid Grid is a helpful tool for conveying student specific information
 3. Meetings are scheduled at the end of May to discuss identified students' needs and transition plans
 4. Teams collaborate to share information between grade levels.
 - **How will the district further explore the factors that have impacted poor scores for individual students on state assessments?**
 1. Ongoing review of student data is conducted within the Laconia School District. Through the district wide Bernhardt Data Team an established process is in place. School staff will continue to review individual student progress and the result of state assessments to determine if individual student progress is being made and if additional interventions and supports are required to further support those students who may require such support.
 2. Teams will review with students the practical test-taking skills necessary to take state assessments.
 - Introduce Performance Pathways as a tool for staff in accessing student data, using data to inform instruction and to identify trends among students.
 - Citations of Non-Compliance Identified as a Result of the IEP Review Visit
 - As a result of the 12 IEP's that were reviewed on March 25 & 26, 2009 the following citations of non-compliance were identified:

Ed 1109.01 (a) (1) Elements of an Individualized Education Program
 CFR§300.320 Definition of individualized education program.(2) (i) Measurable Annual Goals
 IEP goals must be written in measurable terms.

Of the 12 IEPs reviewed 5 did not contain Measurable Goals. It is noted that the Laconia School District has already provided professional development to teams regarding this citation.

- Student achievement data (state, district, classroom)
 - See attachments regarding data collection
 - Student Achievement Teams meet at the elementary level every two weeks to monitor progress in reading and writing skill development. They collect data on Wilson Reading Assessments, DIBELS, Writing Rubrics
 - Middle School Teams meet weekly to discuss student progress in their reading classes and to design lessons to support continued growth.

VI. Determine Effective Practices and Write a Plan

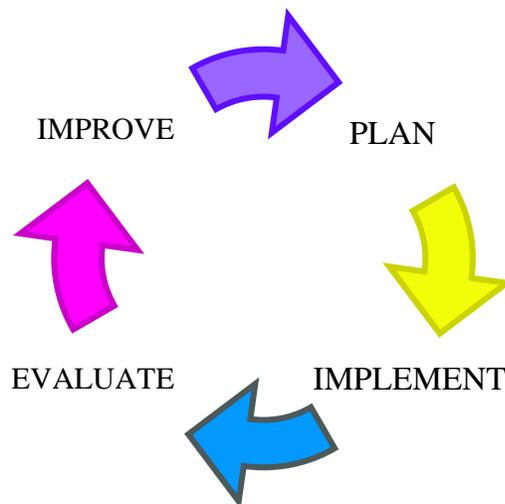
What are our priorities?

What specific practices will we use to address our identified needs?

What is our plan for systems improvement?

What were the findings from the data collected?

- ✓ Our Focused Monitoring Team met with Brad Geise to address all areas of school processed with a focus on special education processes using the Special Education Continuous Improvement Continuums. There were thirty-two people who participated in this process – eight administrators and twenty-four teachers. The continuums lead the team through a process of exploring seven areas for school improvement – Information and Analysis, Student Achievement, Quality Planning, Professional Learning, Leadership, Partnership Development and Continuous Improvement Education.
- ✓ From this process, our review of student learning data, our understanding of Laconia School District's demographic data and the perceptual data – we have developed several action steps. (see the attached form)
 - Administer the parent and student special education questionnaire
 - Use problem solving cycles to further examine root causes and to engage in continuous improvement cycle.
 - Clearly define a continuum for learning based on best practices – effective instruction for all staff.
 - Articulate a shared vision that identifies our values and beliefs.
 - Develop long range plan for professional learning.
 - Articulate and share our mission and vision.
 - Identify and seek out partnerships to help meet the vision.
 - Participate in Data Camp Summer 2009
- ✓ Continuous Improvement Cycle



VII. Implement, Monitor and Evaluate

Are we doing what we said we would do in our plan?

Are we doing it well?

Is it having an impact on student achievement?

What evidence do we have that the plan is positively impacting student achievement?

- ✓ Our Focused Monitoring Team and Bernhardt Leadership Team will be attending the Data Institute at Plymouth State University for two days this summer. We will focus on developing this component of our Focused Monitoring Plan. The essential components are present for us in our action plan – it is a matter of formally determining timelines for implementing, monitoring and evaluating the components of our plan.

VIII. Addendum

- ✓ Focused Monitoring Team 2008-2009
- ✓ NECAP 2006-2007, Disaggregated Proficiency
- ✓ NECAP 2007-2008, Disaggregated Proficiency
- ✓ NECAP 2008-2009, Disaggregated Proficiency
- ✓ Notes from FM Team Meeting, December 2008
- ✓ Laconia School District, Kid Grids
- ✓ Laconia Elementary Schools Literacy Assessment Data
- ✓ Laconia Elementary Schools Intervention Program
- ✓ Compliance Component of FM – IEP Review, March 25-26, 2009
- ✓ Writing Effective IEP Goals and Measuring Progress, Carol Kosnitsky's power point
- ✓ Invitation to Focused Monitoring Team and Bernhardt Leadership Team, May 13 – 14
- ✓ Special Education Continuous Improvement Continuums
- ✓ Outline/Process for Creating a Shared Vision
- ✓ Continuous Improvement Planning Process
- ✓ Perception Data Gathered from Staff, Spring 2009
- ✓ Process for Reviewing Perception Data
- ✓ Focused Monitoring Improvement Plan
- ✓ Overview of Bernhardt Summer Data Institute, August 13 - 14