

Waterford Township School District, Camden County



The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) Lighthouse District Initiative recognizes districts that have demonstrated measurable progress across diverse groups of learners. The NJDOE is proud to welcome the Waterford Township School District to the second cohort of Lighthouse Districts.

Waterford is focused on providing supports for students to improve performance in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. Waterford has bolstered the importance of literacy instruction through differentiated models, including Reader's/Writer's workshops, guided reading, book clubs, and word study. The district offers supplemental support through Leveled Literacy Intervention, Reading Recovery, Seeing Stars, and Visualizing & Verbalizing. Educators continually monitor student progress through Fountas and Pinnell's Benchmark Assessment System, as well as anecdotal notes, observations, and the Phonological Awareness Skills Test (PAST). The district initiated a partnership with Lesley University to support deep understanding of effective instructional practices that encourage students to utilize strategic reading and writing behaviors to become literate citizens.

Three years ago, Waterford adopted "GO Math!" for grades K-5 and "Big Ideas" math for sixth grade. Teachers use a guided math approach to instruction, which includes differentiated stations/centers during daily Response to Intervention time. In addition, number talks are being utilized in the classroom to promote flexible thinking, fluency, mental math, modeling and reasoning skills. Teachers utilize a combination of whole class, small group, stations/centers, and individual conferencing to meet students' needs. In both Math and ELA, educators use data to drive instruction, identify students in need of support, and make well-informed curriculum decisions. The district curriculum is an evolving document that teachers and administrators consistently utilize and revise.

Grounded in the commitment to provide early childhood education, Waterford Township School District was awarded Preschool Education Expansion Aid (PEEA), further expanding opportunities for preschool students, particularly in the area of family engagement. The Early Childhood Advisory Committee meets quarterly and involves various community stakeholders. The district has increased family engagement through monthly parent interaction meetings; family literacy and math nights; and the annual Mystery Reader program.

Waterford educators believe social and emotional skills play a critical role in the development of the whole child. The district adopted two programs that promote health and wellness: the Sanford Harmony – Character Education program and Healthy U – Wellness Program. During the upcoming 2019-2020 school year, teachers will receive training in creating a trauma-sensitive environment as well.

Driven by district goals, professional development is a top priority. Staff input is crucial to provide opportunities that engage staff in professional reflection and dialogue. Instructional coaches have been instrumental in supporting teachers in making paradigm shifts and implementing district initiatives. Teachers are also encouraged to assume leadership roles by highlighting instructional practices and serving as team leaders.

Collaboration is another key to Waterford Township's success. The district has found that increased articulation with other districts, including the Hammonton School District where Waterford Township students attend grades 7-12, has enabled Waterford to remain current with effective instructional practices that contribute to student achievement and success.

Waterford Twp. School District Demographic Information

Grades Served: Pre-K to 6

Total Enrollment: 810

Economically Disadvantaged:
27.4%

Students with Disabilities: 15.9%

English Learners: .1%

Schools in District: 3

Ask Waterford to Share Their Story

- 1) Preschool expansion and community support
- 2) Small group instruction
- 3) Professional development driven by district goals
- 4) Social and emotional learning

Contact Information

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