

West Deptford School District, Gloucester 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 West Deptford School District to the second cohort of Lighthouse Districts.

The West Deptford school community is passionate about student success and developing innovative ways to promote growth in their school district. About four years ago, the district staff took a hard look at their curriculum and determined that they had to readjust to better meet the needs of all students. They enhanced their English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics curriculum to better align with state standards to promote student improvement. In addition, the use of literacy and math coaches at the elementary level has helped the district foster cohesion in instruction. The district has also sought innovative strategies to compliment curricular enhancements including implementation of data-informed decisions and professional learning partnerships.

The district has created data teams to make informed decisions regarding assessment and curriculum. The teams triangulate local formative, summative and statewide assessment data. When analyzing data, the teams go beyond the academic lens and include social and emotional indicators to support student success. The data teams' input has led the district to invest in new content programing, curriculum realignment with assessments, increased instructional time in writing, creation of new high school academies and clearly define instructional time expectations.

Partnerships with universities have increased the district's capacity. One partnership included a four-day Reading and Writing Institute for teachers to strengthen their writing instruction and develop new methods to create and innovative writing experiences for students that improve instruction and impact student growth. Another partnership has led to the middle school being designated as a Rowan Professional Development School. In 2017, West Deptford received the New Jersey Tiered System of Supports Early Reading Grant which allowed them to partner with university-trained coaches to improve reading achievement in kindergarten to grade three. The grant allowed district leadership teams to develop strategies with coaches to focus on family and community engagement, as well as school culture and climate to increase literacy.

The district also has innovative student peer-to-peer and teacher-to-student mentoring programs. Elementary students are matched with high school student athletes to motivate and encourage them throughout the school year. The middle school has Leading Ladies, and Boys to Men which identifies students who show leadership in the school community. They also have a Student Teacher After School Mentoring Program (STAMP), which links students in need of additional supports with staff members to support them academically and emotionally.

The district's peer mentoring programs, as well as the district's family nights in Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) and reading, foster a sense of community in the district and build a stronger culture and positive experience for students. Strong community partnerships with the local Parent/Teacher Organization, town council, police department and local businesses help students within West Deptford grow. Along with building strong relationships, multiple measures of data are used to support student needs inside and outside of the classroom.

West Deptford School District Demographic Information

Grades Served: Pre-K to 12

Number of Schools: 5

Total Enrollment: 2,877

Economically Disadvantaged:
25.5%

Students with Disabilities: 23.3%

English Learners: 0.4%

Ask West Deptford to Share Their Story

- 1) Data-rich practices
- 2) Curriculum redesign
- 3) Program redesign
- 4) Professional learning partnerships
- 5) Student mentoring programs

Contact Information

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