

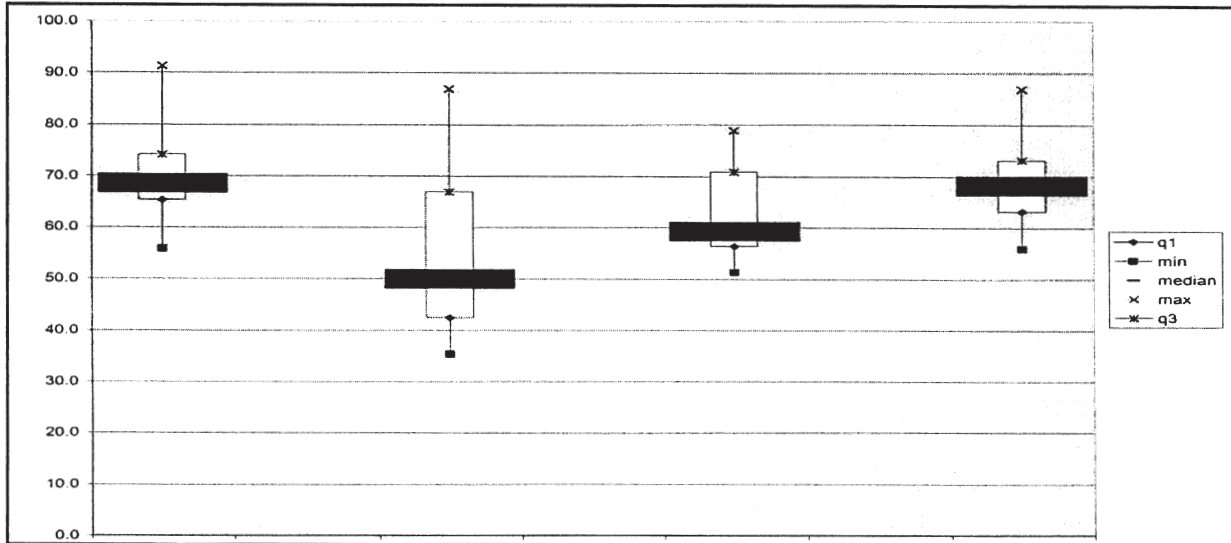
- The need to develop principal instructional leadership and create opportunities for teacher leadership and shared leadership
- The need to use student performance data effectively to change instructional practice and reallocate resources

In addition, our findings deal with the critical issue of student performance in reading and math at the elementary level.

The table below summarizes Spring 2004 Third Grade Reading Achievement of all six elementary schools visited by content strand, listing the percentage of students at/above and below the standard.

Third-Grade Reading Achievement, Spring 2004 Performance by Strand (Percent)								
	Acquisition of Vocabulary		Reading Process		Informational Text		Literacy Text	
	At/above	Below	At/above	Below	At/above	Below	At/above	Below
Brinkerhoff	75.4	24.6	71.9	28.1	78.9	21.1	73.7	26.3
Prospect	91.3	8.7	86.9	13	73.9	23.1	86.9	13
Newman	64.8	35.1	40.5	59.5	51.3	48.6	64.8	35.1
Sherman	70.4	29.6	51.8	48.1	56.8	43.2	71.6	28.4
Carpenter	55.8	44.1	35.3	64.7	61.7	38.2	55.9	44.1
Hedges	66.7	33.3	48	52.1	56.2	43.8	62.6	37.5

The graphic below summarizes the Grade 3 reading performance of all six elementary schools visited by strand based on quartiles (four groups of data, each containing exactly 25 percent), with 50 percent of the data contained within the boxes. The graphic illustrates the relatively large standard deviation or variability in student performance among schools that is not readily apparent in the previous table. Although some variance between schools is expected, the district should expect a relatively “tight” dispersion for a given strand. These data suggest an unacceptably high incidence of dispersion, from a minimum of 27.6 percent (Informational Text) to a maximum of 51.6 percent (Reading Process), suggesting uneven implementation of the elementary reading program, assuming its alignment. Furthermore, in three of four strands, the mean percentage of students scoring at or above the proficiency level is below the standard.



As indicated in the table below, statewide average performance on the Grade 4 reading rest has gained approximately 6.6 percentage points in the past 3 years; conversely, the performance of the six elementary schools has remained relatively flat over time and well below the state averages for the period 2001–2004.

Grade 4 Reading, 2001–2004 Percent Proficient and Advanced									
	Brinkerhoff	Prospect	Newman	Sherman	Carpenter	Hedges	Averages		+/-
							District	State	
2003–2004	43.1	38.9	31.6	40.5	25.0	33.3	35.4	69	-33.6
2002–2003	47.2	34.3	30.5	39.1	41.4	31.1	37.3	64.9	-27.6
2001–2002	61.9	16.7	27.0	32.6	20.9	23.9	30.5	62.4	-31.9

The data discussed above support our observation that the Literacy Collaborative (LC) Model adopted by the district has not been fully or consistently implemented and/or fully aligned with the new reading standards as measured by the new state assessment.

We are aware that the District has invested considerable time and resources, including a full compliment of trained literacy coaches, in the implementation of the Literacy Collaborative Model. Given this level of investment and the relative gains at Prospect Elementary School, we feel that changing the model of instruction for early literacy at this time would be counterproductive and would create more challenges than it would resolve at a time when the district faces multiple change issues. Therefore, our recommendations contain a number of suggestions for supplementation and fuller implementation of the model.

The table below summarizes the percentage of student proficient and advanced in math at Grade 4 over the past 3 years in the six schools visited.

Grade 4 Math, 2001–2004 Percent Proficient and Advanced									
	Brinkerhoff	Prospect	Newman	Sherman	Carpenter	Hedges	Averages		+/-
							District	State	
2003–2004	27.6	50.0	50.0	28.6	21.4	33.3	35.2	63.6	-28.45
2002–2003	34.3	22.7	27.5	37.1	23.5	31.0	29.4	56.7	-27.35
2001–2002	55.3	25.0	23.2	23.9	11.6	37.0	29.3	58.1	-28.77

Statewide, average performance on the Grade 4 math test has gained approximately 5.5 percentage points in the past 3 years; and while the average performance of the six elementary schools has improved at a slightly better rate than the state (5.9 percent), these schools have not closed the distance between their performance and that of the state for the period 2001–2004. In fact, the percentage of students scoring proficient and advanced has declined in two of the schools observed here (Brinkerhoff and Hedges). Otherwise flat improvement rates are masked somewhat by large gains at Prospect and Newman, which doubled the percentage of students scoring in the highest categories.

Our recommendations in this area are limited by the District’s lack of experience with new Grade 3 assessment of the new math standards. The new assessment has been field tested and will be administered for the first time in 2005.

Recommendations

We have a number of recommendations relative to the further implementation of the Literacy Collaborative Model (LCM). The rate and quality of implementation is the prime concern, and there is a pressing need to accelerate progress. A fully implemented program about which all elementary teachers are knowledgeable can also serve as a springboard from which modification based on analysis of student performance can be made.

1. We recommend that a serious gap in the literacy framework be closed by designating the principal of each elementary school as the primary instructional leader and Literacy Coach. LCM training should be a focus for professional development of current principals and requisite for new principals. The district can also develop new principals from its current cadre of coaches by supporting those interested in the completion of state certification requirements.
2. Nationally, the research suggests implementation weakness with the train-the-trainer model used by the LCM. To compensate for this we recommend that the term of Literacy Coach be limited to 2 years, followed by return to a regular classroom. Coaches who return to the classroom should be paid a permanent stipend in recognition of their higher skill level. This stipend should also be made available to a limited number of teachers who complete coach’s training. The objective here is to get as many fully