

New York State Education Department
Contract For Excellence
2008-09 Needs and Strategies Report

NYC CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

CHANCELLOR JOEL KLEIN

Achievement Issues : Describe the overall student achievement need presenting the greatest challenge in your school district which the Contract for Excellence addresses. In particular, describe the needs for those schools in improvement status that qualified your district for the Contract for Excellence.

In the 2007-08 school year, New York students showed increased academic progress. The graduation rate is now higher than it has been in decades. In 2007, 55.8% of City students graduated in four years using the State's method of calculating graduation rates which includes August graduates. Using the traditional City calculation, 62% of students are graduating, compared to 51% in 2002, when Mayor Bloomberg gained control over the City's schools. This rate increase translates into more than 5,000 additional students graduating since 2005.

More students are also meeting and exceeding standards in math and English. Since last year, the percentage of students in grades 3-8 meeting or exceeding standards in math has risen 9.2%, from 65.1% to 74.3%. In English Language Arts, student scores in grades 3-8 have risen by 6.8% since last year, from 50.8% to 57.6%. Six years ago, roughly half of fourth graders and a third of eighth graders were meeting State standards in math and reading. Today, 7 in 10 New York City public school students in grades 3-8 are meeting or exceeding standards in math and nearly 6 in 10 are meeting or exceeding standards in English Language Arts.

Despite this considerable progress, New York City still faces great challenges.

- While the number of students graduating with Regents and Local Diplomas is up 10 points since 2002, nearly 4 in 10 students still don't earn a Regents or Local Diploma in four years.
- While student performance on State tests has jumped almost 30 points in mathematics and almost 15 points in English Language Arts since 2002, far exceeding both State averages and other large cities, system-wide more than 3 in 10 students still do not meet or exceed standards in these basic subjects.
- While New York City's Black and Hispanic students are progressing at a rate more rapid than Asian and white students, there is still a racial achievement gap in math and ELA as these students groups score, on average, several grade levels below their peers.
- More than 400 NYC schools, or approximately 30%, are classified as in need of improvement status under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act as a result of failing to meet annual student achievement targets as determined by New York State.

Continued progress in these areas is the driving force behind the NYC Department of Education's ongoing Children First reforms. Launched in 2003, Children First aims to create 1,500-plus excellent schools, capable of helping the City's 1.1 million schoolchildren learn the skills and receive the support they need to succeed in school and in life. Reforms have included redirecting funds from the Central bureaucracy to the schools, setting new academic standards, implementing core curricula in reading and mathematics, putting a parent coordinator in every school, and holding everyone accountable for results. Additional Children First initiatives target the students who are most at-risk of failing to meet academic standards, such as the recently launched of Middle School Success Plan, the development of a comprehensive Language Acquisition Policy to assist ELLs with cognitive development and academic skills, and the expansion of inclusion classrooms to provide the least restrictive learning environments for students with IEPs.

The Department is committed to continuing to remove the barriers that have traditionally stood in the way of struggling students. Contracts for Excellence (C4E) funds - along with other strategic, supplemental funding sources including Title I-A and Title III funds - represent an opportunity for the Department to build upon its

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fundamental investment in our highest need students. It is our goal to integrate C4E mandates seamlessly into our ongoing reform efforts and to deploy funding in support of school- and district-level initiatives that have a direct impact on achievement.

Contract Plan : Describe the overall strategy your district will implement under the Contract for Excellence to address the above needs. Detail the new and innovative programs selected and how they will integrate with existing improvement plans.

New York City took a three-pronged approach to its proposed distribution of 2008-09 Contracts for Excellence funding. One, we released funds directly to schools to spend on programs aimed at meeting the specific needs of high need students. Two, we distributed funds to schools for strategic program initiatives that meet C4E eligibility standards. Finally, we invested in district-wide programs targeted at our highest need schools and students.

Discretionary Allocations to Schools

An important part of the City's Children First school reforms is allowing principals to make decisions about what they need for their schools and students to succeed. With this in mind, \$243 million, or approximately 63% of the total 2008-09 Contracts amount, was released directly to schools to be used for new or expanded supplemental programs in the six C4E-eligible areas at the discretion of the principal, School Leadership Team, and greater school community. Schools have proposed to use these funds as follows:

- Class Size Reduction: \$84 million (35% of discretionary funds)
- Time on Task: \$78 million (32%)
- Teacher and Principal Quality Initiatives: \$58 million (24%)
- Middle and High School Restructuring: \$11 million (4%)
- Full-Day Pre-Kindergarten Classrooms: \$122,150 (<1%)
- Model Programs for ELLs: \$12 million (5%)

Targeted Allocations to Schools

\$73 million, or approximately 19% of all Contracts dollars, support targeted programs that meet specific student needs in specific schools and are aligned with Contracts-eligible program areas and strategies. Those targeted initiatives are:

- Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT) Classrooms: \$61 million

CTT ensures that students with disabilities are educated alongside age-appropriate peers in a general education classroom. CTT classes consist of one general education teacher and one special education teacher, reducing student/ teacher ratio.

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Programs: \$5 million

Through this program, students with ASD take part in the same activities as their grade-level peers but with environmental modifications and individual adaptations specific to their needs.

- Full-Day Pre-K Programs: \$5 million

These funds will allow the opening of new full-day Pre-Kindergarten programs in schools that previously only supported half-day classes.

- ELL Summer School Programs: \$2 million

These programs provide supplemental services for ELLs, offering these students increased support in

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developing English proficiency, progressing academically and building other skills necessary to meet State standards.

District-Wide Initiatives

\$42 million, or approximately 11% of all Contracts dollars, support programs that, while not administered directly by schools, specifically benefit the highest needs students in the highest need schools. These programs are:

- Principal Training Initiatives: \$10 million

These funds will go towards programs that support aspiring and current school leaders, who serve New York City's highest needs students in the highest needs schools.

- Multiple Pathways to Graduation Initiatives: \$7 million

These programs enable credit accumulation and provide a pathway to graduation for over-age and under-credit students throughout the City.

- School Restructuring Initiatives: \$5 million

These funds will support restructuring efforts in middle, secondary and high schools currently being phased-out due to consistent underperformance.

- ELL and Middle School Success Initiatives: \$20 million

These funds will support programs intended to promote comprehensive ELL and middle school reform initiatives, including but not limited to the ELL and Middle School Success grant programs.

Continuation of Existing Efforts

\$30 million, or approximately 8% of all Contracts dollars, support existing summer school programs designed to raise achievement among students performing below State standards in our highest need schools.

Special Populations : The needs of special populations (LEP, students with disabilities, poverty and students with low achievement) should be assessed, with specific programmatic efforts identified.

Raising achievement for all students is the primary goal of New York City's Children First reforms. Over the past two years, the Department has put extensive measures in place to hold empowered schools responsible for ensuring success among all students. We have created a set of accountability tools that help educators and families evaluate how much each child's school improves his or her learning each year, compare each school's performance to that of similar schools on important educational outcomes, identify each student's instructional needs, create a plan to improve each student's learning, and track student progress at several checkpoints during the year.

As a result of this accountability system, educators throughout the City have a far clearer picture of the students who are struggling to meet academic standards than they've ever had in the past. Along with NCLB accountability results, the data gathered via the Department's Progress Reports, Quality Reviews and Periodic Assessments and analyzed by in-school Inquiry Teams has allowed New York City's educators to gain tremendous insight not only into which students are most in need of intervention but also the types of targeted supports these students require in order to meet their full academic potential.

However, despite these advances in our identification and support of at-risk students, we still face

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considerable challenges. In a city where 84% of students are eligible for free or reduced price lunches, a student is more likely to fall into more than one special need category than none at all. The average New York City school has a concentration of need factor of 1.35, meaning that 100% of its students meet at least one C4E special need criteria (ELL, SWD, poverty, or low academic achievement), with 35% falling into multiple special need categories. For our City's most needy schools, this concentration of need factor can run as high as 2.71.

The Department is the recipient of over three-quarters of a billion dollars annually (in the form of Title I, Title II, and other funds) that allow us to develop and implement programs designed specifically to meet the needs of our special populations. Contracts for Excellence funds, in combination with other supplemental funding sources, will allow us to continue to build on existing citywide programs such as CTT classrooms and ELL summer school that help raise achievement among specific student groups at needy schools as well as to supply discretionary funding to schools to support homegrown initiatives that specifically address the needs of their own ELL, special education, free lunch, and low achieving populations.

In order to ensure alignment of C4E discretionary spending with special population performance and school-wide achievement, Contracts for Excellence planning was included in schools' 2008-09 School Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) process. This annual process, conducted in coordination with the State Education Department, requires that schools outline instructional strategies for addressing their areas of greatest need as identified through NCLB accountability. All schools receiving discretionary C4E funds were required to complete an appendix detailing proposed uses of these dollars, as well as to demonstrate how funds are to be targeted to C4E-identified special populations. As an additional means of establishing a connection between C4E and the CEP special population targeting, the Department directly tied Contracts for Excellence performance targets to both sub-group improvement targets identified in the CEP.

Targeting to Need : Provide evidence that funds are targeted to students with the greatest educational needs. Refer to the Educational Need Matrix e-mailed to each superintendent.

New York City took the following approach to distributing its proposed 2008-09 Contracts for Excellence allocations:

Discretionary Funds: The Department used an allocation formula developed in conjunction with SED to distribute these funds, with 75% of all discretionary funds going to schools in the top 50% of need as designated by SED.

Targeted Funds: For each of the proposed targeted initiatives, the Department allocated Contracts funds based on individual schools' demonstration of need (e.g., growing population of special education students with IEPs calling for integrated settings, high population of ELLs with low academic performance) and capacity to carry out a program (e.g., space to open a new CTT classroom, community demand for a full-day Pre-K program). C4E funds were distributed according to the following hierarchy: 1) SINI schools; 2) Top 50% of need schools as designated by SED; and 3) other eligible schools.

District-Wide Initiative Funds: Since the proposed programs constitute district-wide initiatives maintained by the Department's Central administration, funds will not be distributed directly to schools for operational purposes. However, in order to allow SED to assess the Department's success in meeting the 75/50 test, we have allocated these funds on paper to reflect the populations and schools that we anticipate will be served.

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Continuation of Effort: C4E funds were distributed according to the following hierarchy: 1) SINI schools and 2) Top 50% of need schools as designated by SED.

As a result of this targeted approach, New York City's proposed C4E plan meets the 75/50 rule as defined in the Contracts for Excellence regulations, with 75% of all funds going to schools in quartiles 3 and 4.

All related back-up documentation in support of this has been provided to SED.

Performance Targets : You will need to complete a detailed Performance Matrix in the application that will capture the specific gap reduction you expect in each school with C4E funds for specific accountability areas and subgroups of students. In this narrative, describe the overall achievement outcomes that you anticipate will result from the C4E programs.

Each year, schools undertake an extensive Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) process in which they are asked to devise "action plans" aimed at addressing the specific needs of student groups who did not meet NCLB accountability targets. These action plans outline instructional strategies that the school will implement in order to raise achievement among targeted groups and take into account all supplemental resources available to principals.

Since Contracts for Excellence funds are a strategic and important supplemental resource available to principals as they seek to improve student achievement, schools were asked to include C4E spending in their 2008-09 action plans. As such, 2008-09 Contracts for Excellence performance targets have been directly tied to the overall school and student improvement targets addressed in the CEP. This alignment ensures that schools have a singular focus as they seek to raise achievement for groups who currently fall short of meeting state standards.

The methodology used for assigning targets was as follows:

Schools were assigned between one and three C4E performance targets depending on the total amount of their proposed 2008-09 C4E allocation. Specific performance targets for subject and student group were selected according to the following hierarchies:

Subject Area Hierarchy:

For 3-8 Schools: 1) ELA; 2) Math and 3) Science

For High Schools: 1) ELA; 2) Math and 3) Graduation rate

Student Group Hierarchy:

Priority #1: Groups that did not meet Safe Harbor targets in 2006-07

Priority #2: Groups that met Safe Harbor targets in 2006-07 but did not meet the EAMO

Priority #3: Groups that met EAMO or made Safe Harbor targets in 2006-07 but have an achievement gap relative to the All Students group

For schools with multiple student groups meeting these criteria and/or multiple performance targets, targeted groups were selected in the following order:

- Students with Disabilities
- English Language Learners/Limited English Proficient (ELL/LEP)
- Students in Poverty
- All Students

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- Racial/Ethnic Groups (i.e., American Indian/Alaskan Native, Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, White)

Specific numeric performance targets will not be assigned to schools until 2007-08 accountability details are released by New York State. In the interim, target ranges have been defined as follows:

For Priority Groups #1 and #2 (designated in the Performance Matrix as "X"): Targeted groups are expected to make AYP via meeting EAMO or achieve a 10% gap reduction (Safe Harbor), whichever requires the lower Performance Index.

For Priority Group #3 (designated in the Performance Matrix as "Y"): Targeted groups are expected to meet or exceed the Safe Harbor target or EAMO or to increase performance by 1 index point over the prior year, whichever requires the higher Performance Index.

Of the 1,439 schools proposed to receive C4E funds in 2008-09, 772 have at least one "X" target and an additional 572 have at least one "Y" target. The remaining 95 schools were not accountable using State assessments in the 2006-07 school year but will be accountable for their performance in 2008-09. Their goal is to make AYP in ELA and math in 2008-09.

Please note that C4E performance targets only represent a subset of student achievement goals as identified in individual schools Comprehensive Educational Plans. Schools are expected to make progress towards bringing all identified student groups to standards regardless of whether targets for a particular group have been included in the Contracts for Excellence Performance Matrix.

Maintenance of Effort : Describe how you will continue your previous year's C4E program expenditures. Explain any reductions in expenditures that will be reallocated as part of this year's contract.

The DOE is not proposing changes to its 2007-08 (maintenance of prior year's effort) spending in 2008-09. The 2007-08 approved plan is available for public viewing at: <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/BudgetsFairStudentFunding/ContractsforExcellence/0708plan.htm>

The only exception is the reallocation of approximately \$1.7 million that had been distributed to 12 sites that closed at the end of the 2007-08 school year. These funds were redirected to the Department's 2008-09 Contracts amount by SED and subsequently folded into a district-wide initiative to support restructuring efforts at middle and high schools currently in the process of phasing out.

New vs. Continuation of Existing Programs : Describe how funds will supplement and not supplant current programs, except where allowed.

The DOE is complying with all C4E requirements, including the requirement that funds must supplement, not supplant local funds. The sole exception to this is the \$30 million earmarked for continuation of existing programs and allowable under the Contracts for Excellence regulations.