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K-8 RECONFIGURATION OF A MIDDLE SCHOOL AND ITS IMPACT ON THE  
GRADE EIGHT – PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

by  
Samuel C. Hull

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the  
Master of Arts Degree  
Of  
The Graduate School  
At  
Rowan University  
May 1, 2004

Approved By.

 Professor

Date Approved

4-7-04

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## ABSTRACT

Samuel C. Hull

K-8 RECONFIGURATION OF A MIDDLE SCHOOL AND ITS IMPACT ON THE  
GRADE EIGHT – PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT.

2003-2004

Dr. Dennis Hurley

Master of Arts in Education Leadership

The purpose of this exploratory investigation was to determine the effectiveness of the reconfiguration of a middle school to a K-8 building and its impact on the eighth grade students and their performance on the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA) test using a method of inquiry design. This study addresses (a) the change agents and how to handle them and (b) identifies the components and ramifications of change. Interviews, observations, and the review of material culture was used to conduct the study. The data gathered was compiled in the narrative with information being shown as tables, charts and graphs. The Data gathered show that students who attend a K-8 school performed better than student attending a middle school. Standardized test scores of K-8 students were better than those of middle school students.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Poor scores on the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA) test had created an uproar among the board members, administrators, parents, and community members. Over the past six years, the eighth grade students attending the Middle School had consistently performed inadequately on the GEPA. Annual yearly progress had not been made and there was a concern that if something were not done, the district would not meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation.

An examination of the current middle concept and a comparison to the proposed reconfiguration of the school to a K-8 format was attempted. This examination was done by interviewing past and current eighth grade teachers, observing classroom instruction, and reviewing materials related to the study.

In September 2003, the district being studied consisted of six K-8 buildings and one high school. It was the hope of the stakeholders involved that the reconfiguration would result in increased test scores, compliance with the AYP, and increased parental involvement.

### Focus of the Study

The effectiveness of the reconfiguration of a middle school to a K-8 building and its impact on the eighth grade students and their performance on the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA) test was ascertained.

### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of making a middle school a K-8 school using a method of inquiry design. The change agents and the means of handling them were examined, as well as the components and ramification of change. This study resulted in a feasibility report to inform board members and district administrators of the effectiveness of the change and its impact on students taking the GEPA test.

### Definitions

GEPA – Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment

K-8 - a school consisting of grades kindergarten through eighth

Middle School - a school consisting of grades six through eight

AYP – Adequate Yearly Progress

NCLB – No Child Left Behind Act 2002; A comprehensive education act that is based on high achievement for all students with provisions for accountability, high quality teaching staff and achievement of all subgroups within the district.

Abbott – A decision that was based on the Abbott verses Burke decision that attempts to equalize the funding for all districts. There are 31 such districts in New Jersey.

BSIP – Basic Skills Improvement Program

Special Needs District – a district that is made up of a population of students that have special needs based on income, educational opportunities and academic achievement. In New Jersey this mainly pertains to Abbott districts.

Modern Red School House – A Whole School Reform Model that advocates standards driven instruction. They believe in an interdisciplinary approach to instruction.

ALEM – Adaptive Learning Environments Model

Paideia – A Greek word that means to nurture, as in the nurturing of a child. In school a child is nurtured to become a better individual. The children take responsibility, showing respectability, gaining a love for learning and a sense of community. Paideia is an instructional model using the Socratic teaching method and seminars.

### Limitations

The first limitation was obtaining the cooperation from the previous principal who was not rehired. A second limitation was acquiring the cooperation of the new principal and the staff. Third, was the availability of test scores. Fourth, there had to be a willingness of the district to share data. Lastly, the biggest limitation was the possible postponement of the K-8 reconfiguration.

### Setting of the Study

Bridgeton, with a population of 19,000, is located in Southern New Jersey. Its location provided one-hour access to Philadelphia, Wilmington, Atlantic City, and other New Jersey shore destinations. Although only 6.5 square miles in size, Bridgeton was a true

urban center because of its population and multi-cultural composition. The Pre-K-12 system of approximately 4,200 students has one high school, one adult education program, one alternative school, one ExCel Program for Grades 6-8, and six elementary K-8 schools. There are more than 900 professional and support staff. The district budget was approximately 63 million; yet, Bridgeton was considered one of the special needs districts in the state of New Jersey.

The Board of Education office and the Broad Street School were the primary sources of material culture. Findings show Bridgeton was a low economic urban district (Abbott). According to the 2000 Census Summary Profile, the total population was 28,327 people. A large portion of the population was Hispanic, with a Mexican majority (3264). Many of the adults in the Mexican section of the community were migrant workers whose families traveled with them for labor. This instability led to frequent social mobility. The racial make-up of the city of Bridgeton, household income, and family household incomes are reflected in Tables 1, 2, and 3. Table 4 represents the racial breakdown for the schools in the Bridgeton Public School System.

Table 1

The Racial Breakdown of the Population

Ethnic Group	Total Number	Percent
White	8,854	31
Black	9,528	33.5
Hispanic	5,576	20
Am. Indian & Alaska Native	271	1
Native Hawaiian/Other Pac. Islander	159	.5
Some other Race alone	3,112	11
Two or more Races	827	3
Total	28,327	100.0

Table 2

Household Income in 1999

	Number	Percent
Households	6,173	100.0
Less than \$10,000	1,163	18.8
\$10,000-\$14,999	572	9.3
\$15,000-\$24,999	1,151	18.6
\$25,000-\$34,999	849	13.8
\$35,000-\$49,999	840	13.6
\$50,000-\$74,999	992	16.1
\$75,000-\$99,999	329	5.3
5		
\$100,000-\$149,999	217	3.5
\$150,000-\$199,999	16	.3
\$200,000 or more	45	.7

Median Household income (dollars) \$26,923

Table 3

Family Household Income

Families	4,529	100.0
Less than \$10,000	584	13.7
\$10,000-\$14,999	334	7.8
\$15,000-\$24,999	821	19.3
\$25,000-\$34,999	654	15.4
\$35,000-\$49,999	628	14.7
\$50,000-\$74,999	779	18.3
\$75,000-\$99,999	253	5.9
\$100,000-\$149,999	159	3.7
\$150,000-\$199,999	16	.4
\$200,000 or more	31	.7
Median Family income (Dollars)	30,502	

---

The school system consists of six K-8 schools and one high school. It was a "receiving" district. The total enrollment for the district by grade, race, sex, and educational classification is displayed in table 4. The total school enrollment for Broad Street School was approximately 1055 students.

Table 4

Bridgeton Public School Enrollment by Grade, Race, Sex, and Educational Classification

	White		Black		Hispanic		Am.Ind/Alask.		Asian/Pac.Isl		Total	
Grade	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Full-day Pre-K	24	15	58	70	60	51	0	0	0	0	142	136
Full-day K	21	20	63	85	64	64	0	1	0	2	148	172
Grade 1	15	22	90	89	71	69	0	0	0	0	176	180
Grade 2	17	24	66	66	57	69	0	0	1	1	141	160
Grade 3	19	16	94	95	66	64	0	0	0	0	179	175
Grade 4	20	19	71	75	61	57	1	0	0	1	153	152
Grade 5	17	26	75	75	45	54	1	0	2	1	140	156
Grade 6	24	22	87	67	40	51	1	1	0	0	152	141
Grade 7	20	16	83	76	38	45	1	0	0	0	142	137
Grade 8	27	22	57	64	27	23	0	0	2	0	113	109
Grade 9	32	23	72	79	49	39	0	0	1	0	154	141
Grade 10	25	32	50.5	58.5	25	43	0	0	1	1	101.5	134.5
Grade 11	23.5	26	37	34.5	17	16.5	0	0	1	0	78.5	77
Grade 12	23.5	21	32	33.5	16.5	17.5	0	0	2	1	74	73
Cognitive Mild	2	4	31	20.5	12	6.5	0	0	0	0	45	31
Cognitive Mod.	3	1	13	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	19	3
Learn/Lang.Dis.	16	11	91	43	21.5	15	0	0	1	1	129.5	70
Beh. Dis.	4	1	36	13	7.5	2	0	0	0	0	47.5	16

Multiple Dis.	3	1	8	7	2	1	0	0	0	0	13	9
Total	336	322	1114.5	1053	682	687.5	4	2	11	8	2148	2072.5

**Total for all Students- 4220.5**

The vision for the Bridgeton School District was a learning community worthy of state and national recognition created through the cooperation of schools, parents, and the community. A learning community in which:

- All students were expected to exceed the basic expectations of the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards
- All students were expected to be able to learn in safe, non-violent, and drug-free classrooms and schools
- The unique differences, needs, and abilities of all students was recognized, respected, and addressed
- All students were expected to graduate from high school with the skills to enter college or a technical or trade school or to embark on a responsible future career plan.

The mission of the Bridgeton Public School District, as the beacon from a diverse community united in a commitment to public education, was to:

- a. Educate all students in a safe, secure, and caring environment

- b. Encourage life-long learners
- c. Ensure that all students discovered and developed their own special talents
- d. Ensure that students achieved their educational career goals and succeeded in a rapidly changing, multicultural society
- e. Promote responsible citizenship in our democratic society

This mission involved the empowerment of students, parents, staff, and the community. It also provided for a strong core curriculum, the offering of special programs, and alternative learning experiences.

Prior to 1847, the children of Bridgeton and the surrounding area were educated in what we would now call private schools. The first public schools for Bridgeton children were erected in 1847 and 1848. This was a considerable achievement for such a small community.

In 1850, the State Superintendent of Schools made a report to his superiors that there were only twelve free public schools in the entire State of New Jersey. Two of them were in Bridgeton, with one on each side of the Cohansey River.

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Bridgeton's Public Schools were separated into three levels: "primary", with the youngest students; "secondary", with the middle grade students; and "grammar", with the oldest students.

By 1879 the name “high school” started to be used to identify the highest class of grammar students. The next lower classes were identified as first through sixth, with much variation to the system depending on the particular year’s records being examined.

The students’ names were kept in large ledger-type books that were preserved by the Bridgeton school system. Through the 1880’s some records used the words high school to identify some grammar school classes and in other years the term was not used at all. In addition, the grammar school students were scattered throughout the city’s public schools. Clearly there was a great lack of organization at that point.

The public school system that most residents can remember developed at the turn of this century. At this time several elementary schools were constructed:

- Pearl Street School (1884)
- Vine Street School (1898)
- Bank Street School (1892)
- Irving Avenue School (1894)
- Monroe Street School (1899)
- South Avenue School (1903)

Though some of these buildings were no longer in existence, some were being used as facilities in a non-educational field.

Most of our modern elementary schools were constructed in the 1950’s and 1960’s:

- Quarter-Mile (1955)

- Indian Avenue School (1955)
- West Avenue School (1963)
- Cherry Street Elementary School (1963)

All of these buildings had additions built to them.

In 1912, as the school population increased, the Board of Education purchased the old West Jersey Academy, with plans to turn this site into a modern high school. The old West Jersey Academy was used as a high school but it was not modernized until 1923. New construction at this site was made 1930. This building was the Bridgeton Middle School (Grades 6-8), which was extensively renovated in the early 1980's.

The six elementary schools were:

- Buckshutem Road
- Cherry Street
- Indian Avenue
- Quarter-Mile Lane
- West Avenue
- Broad Street

The curricula in the elementary schools, emphasizing basic skills in mathematics and reading, allowed the students a solid foundation for their entire educational experience.

For students whose test scores did not meet district standards, a basic skills improvement program (BSIP) was provided

Other areas studied included writing, social studies, science, and health. The students in the elementary program also studied art, music, and physical education under certified specialists who met with them on a scheduled basis. In addition to the six elementary schools, there was one high school.

Broad Street School, formerly known as the Bridgeton Middle School, had been reconfigured into a K-8 elementary school for the 2003-2004 school year. The newly formed school worked especially hard to bring a relatively new staff from other buildings together to provide a quality education to over 900 students coming from various other buildings.

Broad Street School's mission was to provide a quality education to all of its students in a safe and orderly environment. This school planned to produce lifelong learners that would be able to compete in a highly diverse and technological environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

According to the Principal of the Broad Street School, Paideia was the Whole School Reform model used there. The 2003-2004 school year marked the fourth year of implementation and signaled the beginning of Phase III, the assessment. The school continued with the Socratic seminars for both staff and students and with coached projects, both integral parts of this model. In the 2003-2004 school year, they were charged with collecting and analyzing data so that they could assess the effectiveness of

the program in student performance, school culture, and test improvement. They were anticipating continued positive results.

Broad Street School offered a wide variety of opportunities for students, including the programs that existed under the Bridgeton Middle School. The school continued with the Honor Society, Yearbook, Kids' Corner, Intramurals, Technology Services, Star Lab, Concerts and Art Shows, Science Fair, Math Tournaments, Student Council, Peer Mediation and Peer Tutoring, and the Renaissance Incentive Program.

Buckshutem Road School was a dynamic, exciting, and actively engaging quality learning environment where "Knowledgeable Equipped Youth Succeeded!" The staff addressed the intellectual, emotional, and social well being of students in grades Pre-K through 8. The staff prepared children with the tools and skills to compete and excel in a changing global environment.

Buckshutem Road School addressed the needs of all students. In addition to the regular curriculum that was aligned with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards, the staff was working hard to provide a developmentally appropriate core knowledge curriculum for all students. Extra help was provided for at-risk students through the Basic Skills Tutorial Program. The staff provided advanced students with Gifted and Talented classes (GEMS). They also provided extended day programs that addressed remedial and enrichment needs, social skills, and sports. Additional school activities included Wall Street Stock Exchange, Hudson Banking Program, School Store,

Family Math, Reading Buddies, Safety Patrol, Dr. Seuss Day, Capps Day, Career Day, Community Service Projects, 24-Game Tournament, Governor McGreevey's Book Club, Principal's Book Club, Multicultural Assemblies, Spring Concert, Holiday Concert, Martial Arts Program and Basketball League.

Cherry Street School was a Pre-K through Grade 8 elementary school, which housed approximately 540 students with a staff of approximately 80. The school worked hard to provide a fun, safe, and orderly environment, fostering a love of learning which inevitably produced lifelong learners.

Cherry Street School's mission was to provide the best education possible in a safe and orderly environment. They strived to produce lifelong learners who were able to compete and contribute in a global, multicultural, and pluralistic world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Cherry Street continued with the Success for All reform models. The school was currently in its fifth year. All students in grades one through five were screened and placed at their appropriate reading level. Students in need of additional assistance were provided with daily tutoring. Student achievement and success were enhanced through the Family Support Team. The Getting along Together social skills component promoted appropriate behavior, which translated into classroom success.

Cherry Street, in partnership with Rowan University, was in the fourth year of a five-year pilot called the Professional Development School. As many as 16 teachers per year accepted and worked with student teachers after taking a graduate course on campus.

Other professional activities were being developed and implemented over the next two-year period. As an added bonus, Cherry Street School was a distance-learning site. This enabled both students and staff to visit various sites and take courses without leaving the school. A large-screen monitor, camera, and microphone were installed in the computer lab, thus allowing two-way interaction with various educational sites.

The school utilized other resources to promote learning in the school. Child Assault Prevention training was provided annually. The Bridgeton Municipal Alliance regularly conducted a variety of activities for the students. Students in grades three through five enjoyed swimming and water safety courses. Students learned many things outside of the classroom through a variety of field trips to local places of interest, through Bridgeton Main Street Association activities, as well as programs sponsored by the Cumberland County Improvement Authority. Parents were regularly notified of activities through notes, telephone calls, fliers, and home visits.

The building was arranged into “families” in C, D and E halls. Each “family” had a first-through-fifth-grade configuration. The kindergarten was self-contained. A Special Education class was blended with each family either in a self-contained unit or in an inclusion setting. The sixth, seventh, and eighth grades were located in B hall. Cherry Street also promoted pro-social skills through our SFA “Getting Along Together,” the Boy Scouts’ “Learning for Life,” and the “Purple Hands” anti-violence campaign. Teachers spent time each day addressing a social skill or behavioral issue with the class.

This was done to promote cooperation, responsibility, and positive feelings about oneself, peers, and school. The family arrangement, Success for All, and social skills enabled the staff to have a more orderly environment, which was conducive to learning.

Cherry Street School provided a variety of incentives to promote student success. The school promoted programs such as Student of the Month, Honor Roll breakfast, Good Citizenship, and Caught Caring. The school honored approximately 100 students per marking period on the Honor Roll. Carmello's Pizzeria provided free pizzas to the school to praise students for a variety of accomplishments. Multi-culturalism was promoted through Young Audiences of New Jersey programs, teacher- and school-promoted programs, and a Multi-cultural Museum, which was offered once a year. The school featured a championship Double Dutch team each year. There was currently a partnership with Fleet Bank that provided student banking once per week. Trained students served as tellers.

Indian Avenue School adopted the Paideia model, which focused on Socratic seminars through training students to become active participants in discussion and open dialogue. Coached projects encouraged both individual and group performances or products as a means of relating and connecting didactic knowledge with individual and group research and application. As a Paideia School, the staff stressed integrated learning where all subjects were tied together to better increase student understanding and achievement. This model encouraged all students, staff, parents, and community members to be

lifelong learners. Parents were invited to participate in Paideia seminars and view coached projects throughout the year. Coached projects have included MARE and Ocean Week, a Civil War encampment, the Underground Railroad, and the Four Seasons and Growth themes. These programs were extended to sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students.

Indian Avenue provided a variety of after school programs for K-8 students. Clubs were held every day of the week and students were enthusiastic in their attendance. Some examples included Author's Club, Dance, Art, Chorus, Study Buddies, Chess, Math, 24-Game, ESPA, Scrabble, Newspaper, Basketball, Zoo Club, Drama Club, Cooking, Baton Twirling, Double Dutch, Science, Latch hook, Quilting, Martial Arts, Bilingual Tutoring and Governor's Book Clubs.

Several of the classrooms were bilingual learning environments. It was the intent of the very dedicated bilingual staff to quickly acculturate students to the language and traditions of the United States. All students were learning Spanish as part of the World Language curriculum.

The Monthly Awards Program offered recognition of students in these three areas: merit, attendance, and citizenship. The awards program was televised on the local cable channel. Parents and guardians were invited to attend another one of their monthly programs – the Student of the Month Tea. This assembly was designed to recognize students who had distinguished themselves in the classroom. In addition, an Honor Roll

Tea and Breakfast was held at the conclusion of each marking period to recognize those students who had earned academic honors. Indian Avenue parents frequently commended the staff for the attention paid to students who strived to do their best and for the high expectations placed on each student.

Quarter Mile Lane was a renovated elementary school serving students in grades kindergarten through 8. It recognized that children learned from a variety of sources- teacher, parents, other adults, and each other.

The staff at Quarter Mile Lane chose the Modern Red Schoolhouse model because of its record of success in improving student achievement. This initiative benefited children by encouraging parent and community involvement, providing more specialized training for teachers, and expanding the use of technology.

Quarter Mile Lane provided an Extended Day program from December through May where students received additional instruction in language arts and math. Students also participated in a variety of activities including:

- Back to School Night
- 24-Game Math Tournament
- Reading Buddies Workshop
- Spring Concert
- Read Across America Month
- M.A.R.E. Science Program

- Parent Involvement Activities

A variety of field trips were scheduled throughout the year, which provided exciting learning opportunities for students. The staff also invited special guests to school to exhibit historical artifacts, display the rare animals, birds and insects, and share other educational information. In celebration of the diverse culture at Quarter Mile Lane, cultural events included Kwanzaa, Native American celebrations, a Chinese New Year, and Latino American Day, which featured music, dancing, and Mexican food;

West Avenue School was expanded from a PK-5 to a PK-8 school in 2003-2004. The Principal was also excited to be adding three new bilingual classes and a World Language teacher. The school's staff was dedicated to providing each child with the best educational opportunity possible. They realized the importance of developing in each child an attitude of self-respect and self-worth. Various activities provided a variety of opportunities for pupils to form meaningful and responsible relationships.

Since September 2000, West Avenue School had been implementing the Community for Learning whole school reform model in partnership with Temple University. Community for Learning used the Adaptive Learning Environments Model (ALEM) in the classroom, which emphasized providing students with individualized instruction based on diagnosed need. Each student received a prescription, which included a variety of independent and cooperative learning activities. Other parts of the model included

school-wide restructuring, parent and community involvement, and extensive professional development. Teachers used differentiated instruction in 2003-2004.

In addition to strong classroom instruction, there were many unique programs at West Avenue to help students achieve their goals. Both special education inclusion and the gifted and talented programs provided exceptional students with the individualized instruction and support they needed. Some of the activities in which students were involved: 24-Game Math Tournament, Who Wants To Be A Millionaire, ASK Test, Pep Rally, Banking, Stock Market, Safety Patrol, Reading Buddies, Olympic Day, Field Day, Read Across America, Band, String Ensemble, Gifted and Talented Related Arts, and Spring and Winter Concerts found success.

Students had access to some of the best technology available with classroom computer learning centers, a state-of-the-art computer lab, and a newly acquired traveling laptop airport. The guidance and social work programs provided individual, small group and classroom lessons and counseling to help students grow emotionally and socially. Students participated in FamCare, the High School Mentoring Program, Big Brothers/Big Sisters and Peer Mediation. The Alternative Support Team (AST) met weekly to help any student who needed academic or behavioral interventions.

The After-School Program provided many opportunities for remediation and enrichment in reading and math. There are also an Arts and Crafts Class, Volleyball Teams, a Championship Double Dutch Team, and the newly formed Boys' and Girls'

Club and Basketball Teams. Sixth through eighth graders had the opportunity to participate in intramural and intermural athletics. Field trips and assemblies enhanced learning and provided students with real life experiences about the subjects they were studying. Students are within walking distance to the high school stadium, Board Street School facilities, Bridgeton Sports Hall of Fame, Bridgeton Park and Zoo, New Sweden Farmstead, Bridgeton Library and Indian Artifacts Museum. Some other field trips included whale watching, Batsto, Storybook Land, Trenton, New York, theater, farms, and the Franklin Institute. The fourth graders took an annual overnight trip to Echo Hill Outdoor Adventure in Maryland. Some assemblies included the Shoe String Players, Million Dollar Machine, Stewart Sisters: An African Journey, High School Latin American Club Dancers and fire prevention.

Students were recognized for their achievements through incentive programs such as the Honor Roll and Principal's List, Attendance and Citizenship Awards, Student of the Month, Honor Roll Breakfasts, High Fliers Club, Parade of Champions, Academic Excellence Banquet, and the Harry C. Smalley Honor Society.

Bridgeton High School was a comprehensive high school with students in grades 9 through 12. In addition to Bridgeton City students, the high school served as a receiving school for two rural school districts, Downe and Lawrence Townships, which represented diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

A full range of courses in all curricular areas, as well as computers and computer labs, were available to assist students and teachers with instructional needs. Advanced Placement (AP) courses in math, social studies, and science were offered, in addition to remedial and after-school programs to support students with their needs.

Bridgeton High School staff was involved in the state-mandated Whole School Reform process. The staff had implemented the Paideia Whole School Reform model.

There were many exciting programs and opportunities that were available for Bridgeton students. Students excelled in the arts, academics and athletics. Many students who graduated from Bridgeton High School attended two-and four-year institutions, technical institutes, service academies, and vocational schools.

Many Bridgeton students enjoyed a celebrity throughout the State of New Jersey for their athletic prowess and performance. During the 2002-2003 school year, BHS athletes excelled to become state champions in winter track and spring track and had been competitive at the playoff level in other sports areas.

BHS also celebrated students in a number of programs, organizations, and extracurricular activities, including:

- National Honor Society
- Merit Awards Program
- Scholar Athlete
- People's Choice Awards

- Student of the Month
- HOSA
- African American Club and Choir
- Latin American Cultural Club
- Student Government
- Peer Mediation
- S.A.D.D.
- Ski Club
- Choir and Mixed Chorus
- Drama Club
- Baconian and Echo

The Adult and Alternative building, located behind Bridgeton High School, housed the Alternative and the Adult programs and the GED/EFB program at night. All three led to degrees. The Alternative and Adult programs led to a regular high school diploma, while the GED diploma was recognized nationally. In addition, Community Education courses and school-to-career were addressed. The Career Center was a one-stop facility.

The district had developed 28 Innovative Programs over a five-year period.

### **Elementary Level**

- Banking/Stock Market Program: Student operated bank in a realistic bank setting; participants learned all aspects of financial management
- Excel: “Extra Commitment Enhances Learning,” a groundbreaking model that challenged students and staff to go above and beyond the expectations of a traditional school
- G.E.P.A. Camp: Addressed the skills needed by the eighth grade students who took the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment
- M.A.R.E.: Science-based program through Rutgers University that focused on Marine Biology
- Martial Arts: Martial arts program offered after school hours to students in grades 1 through 5
- S.T.A.R.S: An alternative school developed to meet the needs of students who could not function in the mainstream population
- String Program: String instrument program for grade 1-5

### **Secondary Level**

- Air Force Junior ROTC: Student cadets were offered course work to help prepare them for positions in a military or civilian career
- Cisco Networking Academy: Advanced course that taught high school students how to design, build and maintain computer networks

- Climbing Wall: Designed to foster student and staff interest in physical fitness and build self-confidence, strength and endurance
- HSPA: Tutorial program to assist HSPA re-testers
- Piano Lab: Piano instruction available as course selection for juniors and seniors
- School To Careers: Program provided employment training for high school students

#### **District-Wide Programs**

- Academic Excellence: End-of-year event that honored superior student achievement
- Communications: Monthly cable TV programs, quarterly newsletter, staff publication, twice-yearly newspaper insert, recruitment packets
- Communities in Schools: Piano instruction available as course selection for juniors and seniors
- Education Enforcement Officers: Established to promote and foster an environment where staff and students felt safe, and raised the level of excellence in education for the entire district.
- Math and Science: A five-year partnership with Rutgers, Rowan, and Kean universities that increased achievement in science and mathematics for all pre-K through grade 12 students

- N.J.S.B.A. Exhibit: Booth at annual convention used to promote Bridgeton Public Schools
- Parade of Champions: Celebrated academic, athletic, and extra-curricular achievements of student and staff
- Partnership Luncheon: End-of-year event that recognized organizations that had worked in partnership with district
- Professional Development School: Program through Rowan University that enhanced professional skills of district teaching staff and beginning teachers
- Superintendent's High Fliers: Celebrated Academic Excellence of students and Teachers of the Year
- Superintendent's Parent Roundtable: Roundtable discussion with parent representatives
- Superintendent's Tea: High Fliers met with the Superintendent
- Temple Vision: After-school homework program held at Union Baptist Temple in Bridgeton
- Volunteer Luncheon: Spring luncheon to honor parents and community members who worked as volunteers
- Swedish Exchange Program: Academic, athletic, and cultural partnership between Bridgeton and its sister city in Eskilstuna, Sweden

### Organization of the Study

This study took place at the current Broad Street School, previously the Bridgeton Middle School. The school was a K-8 school consisting of 1055 students and 150 staff members. The students in grade eight were the targets of the study.

The techniques of interviewing, observing, and reviewing of material culture was used in this study. The population of study was the eighth grade students, their teachers, and the administrators. This was a yearlong study.

Evaluation of the data occurred on an on-going basis with a monthly assessment of data gathered. The study was opened. The data analysis revealed how the eighth grade students performed on the GEPA. The final report showed an analysis of the results of the last year GEPA test scores as compared to this years GEPA test scores.

## Chapter 2

### Review of Literature

#### Introduction

There had been a number of education reform movements, each one claiming to be the most innovative concept in education history. The education arena had witnessed paradigm shifts that had promised major improvement in the quality of education delivered to students. Many of these shifts claimed to have had the solution to all the problems facing today's educators.

The movement from the one-room classroom, where all grades was taught to the grade-specific, multiple educational, had evolved over the years. During this transition many pros and cons had been researched and validated.

People who were products of various education reform movements had varying thoughts on the success of the movement. A critical look was taken at the not so new, prevailing paradigm shift of converting existing Middle Schools to K-8 schools. The pros and cons of K-8 schools and data used to substantiate schools of thought was provided.

#### Review of Major Concept Related to the Problem

Sharon Cromwell wrote in *Education World Magazine*, "Are K through 8 schools things of the past, and memories of yesteryear? Are middle schools the wave of the

future? Many educators think so, but some still believe K through 8 is the best way to go!” (Cromwell, 1999 para.1)

The question was “What is the best configuration for K through 12 schooling?” (Cromwell, para.3) Many educators had tried to answer this question by research and investigation. The assumption was that middle school aged youth needed a special place where their particular needs could be addressed. Was this assumption true? Were middle schools the best way to educate students in grades six through eight? It was a matter of opinion.

Jennifer Fager of Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory Information Services says, “There is not much, if any, hard and fast research on grade configuration” (Cromwell, para.4). In her research, that was conducted with Catherine Paglin Fager, states, “that some information exists with respect to middle schoolers, but beyond that, it’s mostly anecdotal stuff” (Cromwell, para.5). Her research also indicated that people felt positive about the K through 8 concept because “younger kids have older role models in the building everyday, that is gives them an understanding of the purpose and progression of education... It is also said that it is good for the older kids to be role models and mentors and that this arrangement gives them more of a sense of accountability to their younger admirers” (Cromwell, para.6). The K through 8 concepts also lends itself to the idea of a community type atmosphere.” Fager also says “that on the other hand, a K through 8 arrangement might not be able to tend specifically to the

developmental needs of a particular groups as schools with narrower configurations can” (Cromwell, para.7).

The American Association of School Administrators – the School Administrator published an article “Revival of the K-8 School” in March of 2002. In this article, a critical look was taken at the twenty-one middle schools in Cleveland, Ohio. Barbara Byrd-Bennett, the Chief Executive Officer of the district educating 77,000 students, came to the conclusion that the districts twenty-five middle schools were failing (Padini, 2002, para.2). “Overall test scores plummeted once students reached sixth grade and absence and suspension rates soared” (Padini, para.2). Since the 1999-2000 school year, twenty-one of Cleveland’s middle schools have been reconfigured to accommodate K through eighth grade. Bennett states that “the results have been significant with sixth graders in K-8 schools posting better attendance and higher standardized test scores than their peers in middle school” (Pardini, para.5).

In her research, Carol Chemelynski (2001, para.16) states that “a study done by John W. Alspaugh for the *Journal of Educational Research* found “a statistically significant achievement loss associated with transition from elementary school to middle school at sixth grade compared with schools that encompass grades K-8.” His study found the following:

1. The transition loss in achievement was larger when students from multiple elementary schools were merged into a single middle school during the transition.

2. Students from both middle schools and K-8 schools experienced an achievement loss as they made the transition to high school in the ninth grade. But the achievement loss was greater for middle school students.
3. High School dropout rates were greater for students who had been in middle school than those from K-8 schools (Chemelynski, para. 17-19)

Keith Look, a researcher with the Philadelphia Education Fund, wrote these highlights in the Middle Web List (07/02).

1. K-8 schools may be a viable alternative to the large middle schools, which struggle to be more than factory models of education.
2. K-8 schools can enhance social capital and give at-risk students, in particular, greater opportunities at success by building relationships with staff over a course of nine years. This seems to be fueling, at least in part, the return of K-8 schools in urban and rural communities.
3. Parent involvement can improve because parents are usually happiest with their children's elementary school experiences, and, therefore, are more likely to stay involved in the children's school lives longer because they are already comfortable with the school and its staff AND because younger siblings/family enroll in the same building.
4. Middle grades students in a K-8 school behave differently from those students in a middle school. They take on the role of protector and role model as opposed to having to establish new reputations upon entering a middle school.
5. Absent from the Turning Points discussion, a K-8 school can incorporate a distinct, rigorous, and developmentally appropriate middle grades program within a K-8 grade span (one that includes all recommendations of Turning Points—both editions—from small learning environments to block scheduling, etc.).
6. Transitions to K-8 schools can enhance teacher collaboration and articulation within and across grades.
7. Internal accountability can increase in schools making the transition to K-8 because now teachers know personally who they are sending their children to next

year, and middle grades teachers know who their students are coming from (Look 2001).

Current national research on K-8 schools indicate that K-8 schools out-perform junior high schools in almost every category assessed. Studies have shown that students in K-8 schools showed “higher self-esteem, less victimization by other students, greater levels of participation in extracurricular activities, and healthier adolescent development”(Look). It was also found that “eighth grade reading scores of students in the K-8 schools surpassed their counterparts in junior high school” (Look).

Principals in the Philadelphia School District stated these advantages of K-8 schools:

- It is easier to fill vacancies in the middle grades of a K-8 school than in a middle school.
- A K-8 school is safer than a middle school because older children with younger family members attending the same school take on the part of protector, tutor, and role model. In a middle school, the same children must posture for a reputation, which often leads to the disruption associated with larger middle schools.
- Parental involvement is greater in K-8 schools because parents remain connected to one school longer and are more likely to have more than one family member enrolled in the school at the same time.
- In a K-8 school, younger and older siblings can travel to and from school together, avoiding the stress of elementary and middle schools beginning or ending at different times.
- School staff members feel more connected to the community because K-8 schools serve a smaller geographic area than a middle school. Staff members are able to see their influence as the students grow from small children into young adults under their supervision. (Look, 2001)

What drawbacks existed?

Look stated that some drawbacks do exist. He found that K-8 schools classified were “elementary.” This effected funding: “The middle grades of a K-8 school are funded at a lower level than middle grades of a middle school” (Look, 2001). This funding affected more than the cost of running a school. Look discovered that “K-8 schools are not automatically allocated an assistant principal or a school police officer. K-8 schools must squeeze money from a variety of sources to purchase these positions” (Look). He also states that counselors must deal with nine years of development in the K-8 model, as opposed to three or four in a middle school (Look).

## Conclusion

There were mixed feelings about the K through 8 concepts.

Some of the pros for K to 8:

1. There were fewer conflicts with students and there would be fewer older students at any one school.
2. Students were empowered with a sense of ownership in their individual schools.
3. There were clearly defined step-up requirements and graduations as opposed to Pre-school, Kindergarten, Fifth grade, Eighth grade, and finally High School graduations.
4. K-8 provided a greater utilization of whole school reform models.

Some of the cons:

1. The transitions back to an “elementary school” for sixth and seventh grade students could be disconcerting.
2. The physical layout of the middle school building lended itself to the older child.
3. There needed to be a constant adjustment to balance enrollment demographics.
4. More staff was required due to the need for guidance counselors and other support services for upper grade level students.

Did K-8 work? The education community was still debating this one.

## Chapter 3

### Design of the Study

#### INTRODUCTION

This particular study was chosen because the district examined reconfigured from five K-5 schools, one middle school and one high school to six K-8 schools and one high school. This reconfiguration eliminated the middle school. One of the major reasons for this reconfiguration was that the eight grade students consistently performed poorly on the Grade Eight-Proficiency Assessment (GEPA) Test.

In addition, there was a lack of Parental support for students in grades 6 – 8. Participation in school affairs and student's education was very minimal. It was believed that the reconfiguration of a middle school to a K-8 school would increase performance on the GEPA Test, increase parental involvement, participation in school affairs and more parents would take an active interest in their child's education.

#### GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The research was guided by the investigation of answers to the following Grand Tour Questions and Subquestions.

##### Grand Tour Questions

How did the Administrator adapt to a major change?

### Subquestions

What changes were necessary to implement the reconfiguration?

What demands were placed upon administrator to implement change?

How did the administrator's leadership style change?

How did the expectation of being the instructional leader change?

What managerial functions increased or decreased?

### Grand Tour Question

What were the academic changes that were necessitated?

### Subquestions

What were the previous instructional strategies used to prepare students for the GEPA?

What were the new instructional strategies that were implemented to prepare students for the GEPA?

What were the test results from the previous GEPA Test?

What affect did the K-8 reconfiguration have on the performance of the eighth grade students on the GEPA?

## DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLING AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

There was a random sampling of participants for this study. The techniques of interviewing, observing, and review of material culture was used in this study. The population of study was the eighth grade students, their teachers and the administrators at the Broad Street School, which was the former Bridgeton Middle School.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE DATA ANALYSIS PLAN

Evaluation of the data collected occurred on a daily basis. The principal and the Paideia facilitator assisted in the monthly examination of the effects of the K-8 model in regards to eight-grade student achievement. Weekly articulation sessions were held with the principal and facilitator. The information collected through interviews, observation and the review of material culture was illustrated through written dialogue, charts, tables, and graphs.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE DATA COLLECTION APPROACH

The techniques of interviewing, observing and review of material culture was used in this study. The school principal J. Michael Coyne was interviewed along with Nina Hendricks, Paideia Whole School Reform Model Facilitator. Student records were reviewed and the data collected from the GEPA Test results were analyzed and correlated. Teachers who taught the eighth grade students were observed teaching GEPA Test-Taking strategies. Also, the administrator's preliminary thoughts on the success of the K-8 reconfiguration of the middle school and its impact on the achievement of the eight-grade students on the GEPA was recorded.

## Chapter 4

### Presentation of Research Findings

This particular study was chosen because the Bridgeton district went from five K-5 schools and one middle school to six K-8 schools. One of the major reasons for this reconfiguration was that the middle school eighth grade students consistently performed poorly on the GEPA. In addition, there was a lack of parental support and participation in school affairs and students education. It was believed that the reconfiguration of the middle school to a K-8 school would increase performance on the GEPA and increase parental involvement.

How did the administrator adapt to a major change?

First of all, the district went from a K-5 district to a K-8 district. This meant redirecting the administrator's thinking, as far as education because now three additional grade levels were being added. Since the administrator only worked in a K-5 setting, the Administrator thought about how the administrator was going to address the educational needs of grades 6-8, a whole new testing series, and learning the curriculum. There was an issue that involved dealing with staff at this level and also dealing with children and their needs, especially the social adaptation. All of this was thought through. In addition, thought was given to the integration of the new staff with the existing staff. It took a lot of planning. The Board made this decision and as an employee of the Board it was not

about whether the administrator wanted to do it or not. The administrator had to make it work.

Another change was being uprooted from one building and being sent to another where the administrator was not familiar with the physical plant layout. The administrator took what the previous principal left behind and assessed what would or would not work and planned the schedule.

What changes were necessary to implement the reconfiguration?

The whole district was upended to accommodate the K-8 program. Two-thirds of the middle school teachers were reassigned to the elementary schools to create grade 6-8 classes in those schools. Then the district figured out which K-5 teachers would be moved to the existing middle school to create a K-8 building that had never been there before. It then was decided which students would go to which school because it was decided that a neighborhood school program would be developed. This required looking at the city's layout and how many students each school could accommodate.

There were physical plant issues that were addressed. Furniture, supplies and materials were moved to accommodate the teachers and students. The schedules for grades 6-8 were infused into the K-5 schedule. This required scheduling of additional art and music classes and physical education four days per week. Bathrooms were brought up to code for kindergarten kids at the newly created Broad Street School. Concrete steps were poured in front of urinals so the little kids could reach them. They took art rooms and

industrial art rooms in the basement of the school and converted them over by square footage so they were legal kindergarten rooms. Numerous books were removed and sent to other schools housing grades 6-8 and in return the K-5 books were sent to the Broad Street School to accommodate this age level. Also, orders that were made by the teachers were sent to their new location. The biggest impact was on Broad Street School because it was never an elementary school. Schedules had to be created, a handbook was developed, and rules and procedures on how things would be done were written. In addition, hallways were renamed and rooms were renumbered. Drop off points for the students were reconfigured to address safety issues and drop off times were staggered to reflex the two different shifts that students arrived and departed.

What demands were placed upon the administrators to implement the change?

The demands were to take a school that the Board thought wasn't working and turn into a building that would work. A lot of parents were unhappy with the way the middle school was operated. The social interaction of the students and low-test scores were also a problem. A new school was created where there would be a safe environment and true learning would be going on. The teachers were on-task and demonstrated effective classroom management skills. The staff was informed that this school would be under the microscope because this was the school that everyone thought should have been closed. The problems in this school initiated the plan to reconfigure the district from K-5 to K-8. Questions such as were the kids learning and were the teachers doing their jobs were

asked. The reputation of the principal and staff were put on the line to make this reconfiguration work.

How did the administrator's leadership style change?

The administrator was a nurturing person. The administrator took the staff of the old middle school and made them feel like they were appreciated and their territory was not being invaded. The previous teachers felt like they were being punished. They were told they did not know how to do things right, so staff was brought in to show them how it was to be done.

Time was taken with the new staff that had been assigned to Broad Street School. They were made to feel welcomed and comfortable. The principal tapped his inner strength and creativity, which developed an atmosphere of teamwork. The principal developed an open-door policy, which made the principal visible in the building. Longer days were worked so that the principal was accessible to all students and staff. The principal was pleasant to people, listened to their concerns and took their suggestions under consideration. All of this brought the administrator's leadership style to the forefront and magnified what was already there.

How did the expectation of being the instructional leader change?

The role of the principal of the Broad Street School changed dramatically. The principal came from a school of 500 students to a population of 1,045 students. Previously, there were forty-three professional staff and thirty-seven other staff to make a

total of eighty staff under the administrator's charge. Now there were one hundred and fifty employees, of which eighty were teachers. The previous Whole School Reform model was Success For All (SFA) and now the reform model being administered was Paideia. The principal's experience was with the K-5 curriculum. The principal adapted and learned the K-8 curriculum. This brought about a concern for the GEPA test, the items taught in grades 6-8, what the expectations were, the grading and reporting system and computerized report cards. This was a challenge but the adjustment was made.

What managerial functions increased or decreased?

Whatever the administrator did before as a manager was now doubled. There were twice the number of people to be observed, twice the number of students to be supervised and twice the number of report cards to review because the principal reviewed each student's report card. The principal went from a one-story to a four-story building. This was a lot of ground to cover making sure that each classroom was visited each day. The administrator was used to one shift. Now the principal supervised two shifts of staff and students. This required getting all the schedules to mesh and avoiding disturbances of classes due to two different starting times. One secretary was brought with the administrator to the school, another switched positions and one was rehired. A meeting was held with these individuals to develop schedules, duties and expectations to work together as a team. Guidance and attendance taking procedures were changed to fit the K-8 model. Also, the administrator went from having one assistant principal to an assistant

principal and two supervisors with different leadership styles. Their responsibilities were realigned and their functions redefined.

What were the academic changes that were necessitated?

Each child in the school had his own personal schedule. These schedules had to reflect three teachers at each grade level 6-8 to provide instruction. One teacher had to teach one period of Science and one period of Social Studies per day and the Math teacher had to teach two blocks of Math each day and the Language Arts Teacher to teach two blocks of English per day. World Language was infused as a regular part of the curriculum. Music was taken twice per week. Art was taken twice per week. On the fifth day, World Language was taught. Instead of having Physical Education every day, the students had it four days per week and on the fifth day they had World Language. Everything had to be doubled up to increase time-on-task for Language Arts and Math in an attempt to bring up test scores.

What were the previous instructional strategies used to prepare students for the GEPA?

GEPA camp was held to address the skills and test-taking strategies necessary to pass the test. Students who volunteered to participate in camp met on ten consecutive Saturday mornings from 8:30am – 12:30pm for camp. Students were fed breakfast, participated in a motivational activity, attended Math, Language, Writing and Computer classes, and ended with lunch. Also, Math and Language classes were doubled. Other encore subjects

such as Home Economics were taken out of the curriculum. The basic core subjects such as Reading, Math, Science and Social Studies were taught.

What were the new instructional strategies that were implemented to prepare students for the GEPA?

Regularly scheduled monthly meetings were held to access where the staff and students were headed. Extended day programs in the area of Math and Language were developed to help increase test scores. The students no longer traveled all over the building. Their classes were scheduled within ten to fifteen yards of each other. This reduced the amount of transition time and increased the amount of bell-to-bell instruction. The students dealt with three teachers for their core curriculum content courses, which enabled the teachers to better know their students and their abilities. A lot of instruction was centered on the Paideia seminars and open-ended questions. In addition, the teachers took the weakest students during their prep periods and tutored them in an effort to raise test scores. The report cards of the eighth grade students were reviewed and out of seventy-five students, five were at-risk.

What were the test results from the previous GEPA test?

The test scores were not good. The fiftieth percentile was the benchmark and most of the students were well below this level.

What affect did the K-8 reconfiguration have on the performance of the eighth grade students on the GEPA?

Because of the K-8 reconfiguration, students were not dealing with multiple personalities. They only had to deal with three teachers in their academic areas. The eighth grade students no longer had free reign of the building, which limited the trouble they got into as a result of their social skills. This increased their attendance and thus their time on task. Also, there was a noticeable positive change in the eighth grade students' maturity this year. All of these situations played a part in raising test scores.

In conclusion, it was also necessary to note that there was an increase in parental involvement among the eighth grade students. Due to the fact that parents had children in the lower grades that attended the same school, they were able to meet with all of their student's teachers on the same day and at the same place. The Back-to-School night that was held netted over seven hundred parents that attended. A lot of the parents were there for the older students. There was eighty percent parent participation for parent-teacher conferences.

Parents stated that they loved the school; they felt at home and welcomed. Also the students said that they enjoyed having an administrator that talked to them and visited their classroom.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusions, Implications, and Further Study

The effectiveness of the reconfiguration of a middle school to a K-8 building and its impact on the eighth grade students and their performance on the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA) test was researched. A critical look was taken at the change agents involved and how they were handled. The components and ramification of change were identified. This study resulted in a feasibility report used to inform board members and district administrators of the effectiveness of the change and its impact on students taking the GEPA Test.

The reconfiguration of the middle school to a K-8 building brought about a lot of changes. Administrators who were used to dealing with students in grades K-5 were faced with redirecting their thinking and mode of operation to deal with a K-8 population. Social, emotional, mental, physical and psychological issues had to be dealt with that were not prevalent in the previous organization structure. Buildings had to be renovated to accommodate the new reconfiguration. Staff was reassigned teaching duties, responsibilities and buildings in which they were going to teach. Materials, supplies, furniture and textbooks had to be rerouted to their new locations. There was not a choice of whether it was going to be done, but how it was going to get done.

Socialization issues that were once a problem were being addressed with a smaller population. Students were more attentive in class and respectful of school rules and

regulations. Classroom grades showed improvement and homework was turned in with greater consistency. Students were learning and teachers were teaching.

Students no longer had to be the big man or girl in school. Because of the nurturing nature of the administrators and staff, students felt comfortable being kids and took pride in being the upperclassmen and role models for the younger students.

It should be further noted that parental involvement in school increased. Since parents had students in the lower grades, they sought out the teachers of their child in the upper grades when visiting the school. A record number of parents showed for back-to-school night and parent-teacher conferences.

The academic, social, managerial and leadership changes associated with the reconfiguration proved to be positive for all stakeholders that were involved.

GEPA skills were addressed on a daily basis through teacher lead lessons, tutorial sessions and enrichment activities. A GEPA camp was developed to further address the skills needed to pass the GEPA test. Teachers were sent to workshops and overnight conferences that dealt with the state mandated test. The whole school reform models were revised or done away with in an effort to meet the required standards. Some schools opted out of their current Whole School Reform Model and wrote their own.

Students who took the practice GEPA test in September 2003 showed improvement over the test results for June 2003. These results were based on 84 students who took the test as compared to the 252 students who took it in the Spring 2003.

This study had many implications on the leadership skills of the administrators and teachers involved, as well as the research. All had to reexamine how they managed their buildings, staff and students. They became the change agents and implemented the reconfiguration initiatives as designed by the retired Superintendent and her appointed committee. All of the stakeholders involved changed their perspectives in dealing with older students. They became nurturing and familiarized with the issues that this older population faced. The old way of doing things and leading went out the window.

The organizational changes that took place aided in the successful reconfiguration of the middle school. An elementary principal was transferred to the newly reconfigured school, which made the transition from a middle school mentality to an elementary school one easier. Generally, principals who were responsible for middle or high schools found it hard to adjust to an elementary population.

Further study is needed in this area due to the reconfiguration being less than a year old. More data and test scores need to be gathered and compiled in order to assess whether the reconfiguration was really a success. Interviews with administrators and staff will need to be conducted to see if there were attitude or leadership style changes. This issue is an open market in need of continual research.

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## Appendix A

## GEPA Practice Evaluation Summary

**Date of Practice:** 09/28/03

**Grade:** 8

**GEPA Area:** Writing Prompt       
Picture Prompt       
Revise and Edit       
Reading (MC)       
Open-Ended       
Mathematics   X    
Open-Ended   X  

Please be as clear as you can as the evaluation comments will effect curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

1. What areas demonstrated strengths/competencies?
  - Comparing the MC to the open-ended questions, there was a slight strength seen in the area of ?
  - Students are not understanding what is asked in the question and are therefore unable to compute the correct response and select the correct answer from the MC questions.
2. What are the areas of need as you see them?
  - Students need to respond to questions asked – Restate the question in their response to show that they understand the question. Students need to know how to use formulas. (substituting replacement of ?).
3. What do you see as a need(s) in the area of instruction to address these deficiencies?
  - Modeling the correct structure of responses so that students can see how to give their responses clearly.
4. What do you suggest in the area of professional development that could resolve these deficiencies?
  - Practice by the students

## GEPA Practice Evaluation Summary

**Date of Practice: 09/30/03**

**Grade 8**

### GEPA Area: *Language Arts*

### Number of Papers

**Scored: 84**

**Reading MC**

**Open-Ended** **X**

**Please be as clear as you can as the evaluation comments will affect curriculum, instruction, and assessment.**

**CLUSTER(S):** OPEN-ENDED #11

**Number of correct responses:** Of this group, there were no advanced proficient, 31 proficient, 35 partially proficient (score of 1) (18-0).

**CLUSTER(S):** OPEN-ENDED #11

**Number of correct responses:** Of the group, there were no advanced proficiency, 25 proficient (score 2 or 3), 31 partially proficient (score of 1) (28-0).

**CLUSTER(S):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of correct responses:**

**CLUSTER(S):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of correct responses:**

1. What areas demonstrated strengths/competencies?
  - Most students were able to read the text, do the multiple choice questions, and move on to the open-ended questions.
2. What are the areas of the need as you see them?
  - Need to do open-ended questions first
  - Need to restate, find good examples, elaborate
3. What do you see as a need(s) in the areas of instruction to address these deficiencies?
  - Students should be instructed to respond to open-ended questions first in all subject areas during weekly tests.
4. What do you suggest in the area of the professional development that could resolve these deficiencies?
  - Teachers could use a workshop on open-ended questions. (The area of finding good examples seems to be weakest).

## GEPA Practice Evaluation Summary

Date of Practice: 09/30/03

Grade 8

GEPA Area: *Language Arts*

Number of Papers

Scored: 84

Reading MC X

Open-Ended     

Please be as clear as you can as the evaluation comments will affect curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

**CLUSTER(S):** Multiple Choice Questions for Persuasive Essay

**Number of correct responses:** Of the 840 possible responses (84 x 10) only, there were only 3 questions answered with advanced proficiency, 30 answered with proficiency, and 27 were partially proficient. 780 were below partially proficient.

**CLUSTER(S):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of correct responses:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CLUSTER(S):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of correct responses:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CLUSTER(S):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of correct responses:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. What areas demonstrated strengths/competencies?
  - All students were able to read through text and complete the multiple choice section of the test.
2. What are the areas of the need as you see them?
  - Students need to raise comprehension levels, learn to skim for answers, and learn how to eliminate “wrong” choices to help select right ones.
3. What do you see as a need(s) in the areas of instruction to address these deficiencies?
  - Need to improve comprehension – need to learn how to read a passage quickly and still understand – (they don’t connect their reading with comprehension) – need test taking skills.
5. What do you suggest in the area of the professional development that could resolve these deficiencies?
  - Train teachers who need to learn “test-taking tricks” for the students to master.

**New Jersey Statewide Testing System  
Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment  
District Summary Statistics  
Total Students**

TEST DATE: March 2003

REPORT PRINTED: 06 / 04 / 03

COUNTY: **11 CUMBERLAND**  
DISTRICT: **0540 BRIDGETON**

**SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR ADVANCED PROFICIENT AND PROFICIENT STUDENTS**

NUMBER OF TOTAL STUDENTS WHO WERE ADVANCED PROFICIENT OR PROFICIENT IN ALL THREE SECTIONS	ATTEMPTED ALL THREE SECTIONS		ATTEMPTED 1, 2, OR 3 SECTIONS		TOTAL STUDENTS ENROLLED	
	NUMBER <sup>1</sup>	%ADVANCED PROFICIENT OR PROFICIENT	NUMBER	%ADVANCED PROFICIENT OR PROFICIENT	NUMBER	%ADVANCED PROFICIENT OR PROFICIENT
<b>41</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>22 . 0</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>21 . 1</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>21 . 0</b>

**SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR ADVANCED PROFICIENT STUDENTS**

NUMBER OF TOTAL STUDENTS WHO WERE ADVANCED PROFICIENT IN ALL THREE SECTIONS	ATTEMPTED ALL THREE SECTIONS		ATTEMPTED 1, 2, OR 3 SECTIONS		TOTAL STUDENTS ENROLLED	
	NUMBER <sup>1</sup>	%ADVANCED PROFICIENT	NUMBER	%ADVANCED PROFICIENT	NUMBER	%ADVANCED PROFICIENT
<b>0</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>0 . 0</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>0 . 0</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>0 . 0</b>

**SUMMARY STATISTICS BY TEST SECTION**

	NUMBER INCLUDED <sup>2</sup>	MEAN SCALE SCORE	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT		PROFICIENT		ADVANCED PROFICIENT	
			NUMBER <sup>2</sup>	PERCENT	NUMBER <sup>2</sup>	PERCENT	NUMBER <sup>2</sup>	PERCENT
LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY	<b>189</b>	<b>201 . 9</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>43 . 4</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>56 . 1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0 . 5</b>
MATHEMATICS	<b>191</b>	<b>188 . 2</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>72 . 3</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>26 . 7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1 . 0</b>
SCIENCE	<b>191</b>	<b>201 . 5</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>47 . 6</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>49 . 2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3 . 1</b>

<sup>1</sup>EXCLUDES VOIDED STUDENT ANSWER FOLDERS IN ANY OF THE THREE SECTIONS.

<sup>2</sup>EXCLUDES VOIDED STUDENT ANSWER FOLDERS.

**New Jersey Statewide Testing System  
Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment  
District Summary Statistics  
Total Students**

TEST DATE: March 2003

REPORT PRINTED: 06 / 04 / 03

COUNTY: 11 CUMBERLAND

DISTRICT: 0540 BRIDGETON

SCHOOL: 030 BRIDGETON MIDDLE SCHOOL

**SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR ADVANCED PROFICIENT AND PROFICIENT STUDENTS**

NUMBER OF TOTAL STUDENTS WHO WERE ADVANCED PROFICIENT OR PROFICIENT IN ALL THREE SECTIONS	ATTEMPTED ALL THREE SECTIONS		ATTEMPTED 1, 2, OR 3 SECTIONS		TOTAL STUDENTS ENROLLED	
	NUMBER <sup>1</sup>	%ADVANCED PROFICIENT OR PROFICIENT	NUMBER	%ADVANCED PROFICIENT OR PROFICIENT	NUMBER	%ADVANCED PROFICIENT OR PROFICIENT
0	8	0.0	8	0.0	8	0.0

**SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR ADVANCED PROFICIENT STUDENTS**

NUMBER OF TOTAL STUDENTS WHO WERE ADVANCED PROFICIENT IN ALL THREE SECTIONS	ATTEMPTED ALL THREE SECTIONS		ATTEMPTED 1, 2, OR 3 SECTIONS		TOTAL STUDENTS ENROLLED	
	NUMBER <sup>1</sup>	%ADVANCED PROFICIENT	NUMBER	%ADVANCED PROFICIENT	NUMBER	%ADVANCED PROFICIENT
0	8	0.0	8	0.0	8	0.0

**SUMMARY STATISTICS BY TEST SECTION**

	NUMBER INCLUDED <sup>2</sup>	MEAN SCALE SCORE	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT		PROFICIENT		ADVANCED PROFICIENT	
			NUMBER <sup>2</sup>	PERCENT	NUMBER <sup>2</sup>	PERCENT	NUMBER <sup>2</sup>	PERCENT
LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY	8	141.3	8	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
MATHEMATICS	8	158.9	8	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
SCIENCE	8	165.4	8	100.7	0	0.0	0	0.0

<sup>1</sup>EXCLUDES VOIDED STUDENT ANSWER FOLDERS IN ANY OF THE THREE SECTIONS.

<sup>2</sup>EXCLUDES VOIDED STUDENT ANSWER FOLDERS.

**New Jersey Statewide Testing System  
Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment  
District Summary Statistics  
Total Students**

TEST DATE: March 2003

REPORT PRINTED: 06 / 04 / 03

COUNTY: 11 CUMBERLAND

DISTRICT: 0540 BRIDGETON

SCHOOL: 030 BRIDGETON MIDDLE SCHOOL

**SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR ADVANCED PROFICIENT AND PROFICIENT STUDENTS**

NUMBER OF TOTAL STUDENTS WHO WERE ADVANCED PROFICIENT OR PROFICIENT IN ALL THREE SECTIONS	ATTEMPTED ALL THREE SECTIONS		ATTEMPTED 1, 2, OR 3 SECTIONS		TOTAL STUDENTS ENROLLED	
	NUMBER <sup>1</sup>	%ADVANCED PROFICIENT OR PROFICIENT	NUMBER	%ADVANCED PROFICIENT OR PROFICIENT	NUMBER	%ADVANCED PROFICIENT OR PROFICIENT
0	53	0.0	60	0.0	62	0.0

**SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR ADVANCED PROFICIENT STUDENTS**

NUMBER OF TOTAL STUDENTS WHO WERE ADVANCED PROFICIENT IN ALL THREE SECTIONS	ATTEMPTED ALL THREE SECTIONS		ATTEMPTED 1, 2, OR 3 SECTIONS		TOTAL STUDENTS ENROLLED	
	NUMBER <sup>1</sup>	%ADVANCED PROFICIENT	NUMBER	%ADVANCED PROFICIENT	NUMBER	%ADVANCED PROFICIENT
0	53	0.0	60	0.0	62	0.0

**SUMMARY STATISTICS BY TEST SECTION**

	NUMBER INCLUDED <sup>2</sup>	MEAN SCALE SCORE	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT		PROFICIENT		ADVANCED PROFICIENT	
			NUMBER <sup>2</sup>	PERCENT	NUMBER <sup>2</sup>	PERCENT	NUMBER <sup>2</sup>	PERCENT
LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY	55	154.9	55	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
MATHEMATICS	58	159.7	58	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
SCIENCE	57	174.8	54	94.7	3	5.3	0	0.0

<sup>1</sup>EXCLUDES VOIDED STUDENT ANSWER FOLDERS IN ANY OF THE THREE SECTIONS.

<sup>2</sup>EXCLUDES VOIDED STUDENT ANSWER FOLDERS.

**New Jersey Statewide Testing System  
Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment  
District Summary Statistics  
Total Students**

TEST DATE: March 2003

REPORT PRINTED: 06 / 04 / 03

COUNTY: 11 CUMBERLAND

DISTRICT: 0540 BRIDGETON

**SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR ADVANCED PROFICIENT AND PROFICIENT STUDENTS**

NUMBER OF TOTAL STUDENTS WHO WERE ADVANCED PROFICIENT OR PROFICIENT IN ALL THREE SECTIONS	ATTEMPTED ALL THREE SECTIONS		ATTEMPTED 1, 2, OR 3 SECTIONS		TOTAL STUDENTS ENROLLED	
	NUMBER <sup>1</sup>	%ADVANCED PROFICIENT OR PROFICIENT	NUMBER	%ADVANCED PROFICIENT OR PROFICIENT	NUMBER	%ADVANCED PROFICIENT OR PROFICIENT
<b>41</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>15.6</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>15.5</b>

**SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR ADVANCED PROFICIENT STUDENTS**

NUMBER OF TOTAL STUDENTS WHO WERE ADVANCED PROFICIENT IN ALL THREE SECTIONS	ATTEMPTED ALL THREE SECTIONS		ATTEMPTED 1, 2, OR 3 SECTIONS		TOTAL STUDENTS ENROLLED	
	NUMBER <sup>1</sup>	%ADVANCED PROFICIENT	NUMBER	%ADVANCED PROFICIENT	NUMBER	%ADVANCED PROFICIENT
<b>0</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>0.0</b>

**SUMMARY STATISTICS BY TEST SECTION**

	NUMBER INCLUDED <sup>1</sup>	MEAN SCALE SCORE	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT		PROFICIENT		ADVANCED PROFICIENT	
			NUMBER <sup>2</sup>	PERCENT	NUMBER <sup>2</sup>	PERCENT	NUMBER <sup>2</sup>	PERCENT
LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY	<b>252</b>	<b>189.7</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>57.5</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>42.1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.4</b>
MATHEMATICS	<b>257</b>	<b>180.9</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>79.4</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.8</b>
SCIENCE	<b>256</b>	<b>194.4</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>59.8</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>37.9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2.3</b>

<sup>1</sup>EXCLUDES VOIDED STUDENT ANSWER FOLDERS IN ANY OF THE THREE SECTIONS.

<sup>2</sup>EXCLUDES VOIDED STUDENT ANSWER FOLDERS.

**New Jersey Statewide Testing System  
Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment  
Summary of District Performance – Language Arts Literacy**

TEST DATE: MARCH 2003

REPORT PRINTED: 06 / 04 / 03

COUNTY: **11 CUMBERLAND**  
DISTRICT: **0540 BRIDGETON**

ANSWER FOLDERS PROCESSED: **265**

	NUMBER <sup>1</sup> INCLUDED	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT NUMBER PERCENT	PROFICIENT NUMBER PERCENT	ADVANCED PROFICIENT NUMBER PERCENT
TOTAL STUDENTS <sup>2</sup>	<b>252</b>	<b>145 57.5</b>	<b>106 42.1</b>	<b>1 0.4</b>
GENERAL EDUCATION STUDENTS	<b>189</b>	<b>82 43.4</b>	<b>106 56.1</b>	<b>1 1.5</b>
SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS <sup>2</sup>	<b>55</b>	<b>55 100.0</b>	<b>0 0.0</b>	<b>0 0.0</b>
LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENT <sup>2</sup>	<b>8</b>	<b>8 100.0</b>	<b>0 0.0</b>	<b>0 0.0</b>

CLUSTER MEANS<sup>3</sup>

	TOTAL SCALE SCORE <sup>4</sup> MEANS	WRITINGS (26) <sup>5</sup>	READING (36) <sup>5</sup>	INTERPRETING TEXT (15) <sup>5</sup>	ANALYZING/ CRITIQUING TEXT (21) <sup>5</sup>
<b>JUST PROFICIENT MEANS<sup>6</sup></b>		<b>11.2</b>	<b>18.3</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>9.3</b>
TOTAL STUDENTS <sup>2</sup>	<b>189.7</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>8.5</b>
GENERAL EDUCATION STUDENTS	<b>201.9</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>18.7</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>9.8</b>
SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS <sup>2</sup>	<b>154.9</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>4.7</b>
LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS <sup>2</sup>	<b>141.3</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>3.9</b>

STUDENTS CODED BOTH SE AND LEP: **0**  
STUDENTS CODED IEP EXEMPT WHO DID NOT TAKE THE TEST: **0**  
STUDENTS CODED VOID: **13**

1 EXCLUDES STUDENTS CODED VOID.

2 INCLUDES STUDENTS CODED IEP EXEMPT WHO TOOK THE TEST.

3 CLUSTER MEANS ARE RAW SCORE MEANS.

4 THE RANGE OF SCALE SCORES IS 100 TO 300.

5 THE NUMBER IN PARENTHESES IS THE NUMBER OF POSSIBLE RAW SCORE POINTS.

6 THE NUMBERS IN THIS ROW ARE THE STATEWIDE RAW SCORE MEANS FOR STUDENTS WHOSE SCALE SCORE IS 200.

## Biographical Data

Name

High School

Vineland High School  
Vineland, NJ

Undergraduate

Bachelor of Arts  
Sociology  
NJ Teacher Certification  
Rutgers University  
New Brunswick

Graduate

Masters of Arts  
School Administration  
Rowan University  
Glassboro, NJ

Present Occupation

Coordinator of Alternative and Adult  
Education Programs  
Bridgeton Public Schools  
Bridgeton, NJ