Executive Summary
Chappaqua Central School District
K - 6 Literacy Program Evaluation

Conducted by: Theory & Practice | www.theorypracticed.com

Project Objectives, Methodology & Participation

Theory & Practice implemented a mixed-methods evaluation exploring the efficacy of CCSD's existing K-6 literacy program through the Science of Reading, in order to provide robust, practical recommendations specific to this context. Over 11 weeks, 2 consultants collaborated with key district administrators, conducted onsite visits, observed in over 45 classrooms, led a session with the district's Literacy Task Force, conducted 11 focus group interviews with 32 faculty, and analyzed survey responses from 322 parents and guardians, 32 faculty, and 1,514 students. The study resulted in the identification of three key themes and 14 recommendations, the key components of which are highlighted in this summary.

Synergy

CCSD embodies the qualities of a true learning organization, fostering an environment that prioritizes professional growth, innovation, and the pursuit of educational excellence across all levels of the institution. The district is characterized by a highly motivated and collaborative team that consistently demonstrates a commitment to excellence and continuous improvement. Faculty value their colleagues and professional development, are exceptionally dedicated, and have actively participated in this evaluation, advocating for program enhancements.

Change

While core reading and writing curricula and strong performance on standardized assessments remain the same, the literacy program is in the process of transformation, with numerous initiatives in progress. Stakeholders widely perceive the program as being in a state of flux, viewing continual growth and change as both inevitable and necessary. There is substantial feedback on the decision-making and implementation processes, coupled with a strong desire for further improvements. A research-based approach to institutional change with continued emphasis on professional development would ease growing pains.

Alignment

Vertically, horizontally, across programs and approaches, the appetite for continued change can be summed up as a desire for improved alignment in general, and to the Science of Reading in particular. Parents, guardians, and faculty are eager for better communication and a more streamlined suite of programs and assessments that allow for deeper, more meaningful instruction. Comprehensive overhaul would add new elements while strategically removing ineffective components, creating a more focused and effective literacy curriculum.

Key Recommendations

Establish a formal Philosophy of Literacy to guide instruction and decisions district-wide
Provide professional learning to deepen understanding of the Science of Reading at all levels
Replace the Units of Study in Reading and Writing with high quality instructional materials
Align Tier 1 phonics instruction with Tier 2 and 3 intervention programs
Create a philosophy of assessment to guide selection and implementation of tools
Establish a team-oriented approach to educational change and professional development

CCSD is well-poised to implement these recommendations, which will enhance the literacy program, improve outcomes, align with research, and meet the expectations of stakeholders who are eager for positive change.